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AMERICAN YOUTH  
AN ENFORCED RECONNAISSANCE

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# American Youth

## AN ENFORCED RECONNAISSANCE

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*Things alter for the worse spontaneously  
unless altered for the better designedly.*

GEORGE VON LENGERKE MEYER



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## FOREWORD

EVERYONE who is interested in youth today will find something stimulating and consoling in this book, because it gives suggestions for constructive thinking. We have definitely reached the point where, as the editors of the volume point out, the whole field of youth must be analyzed by experts from various points of view in order to determine more precisely the goals we are striving to attain, and to weigh more carefully the means which are being used to attain these goals. This is doubly important because the future of America depends so heavily upon our youth. What our young people become, how they are educated and trained, is a matter that deeply concerns every one of us.

No one can remain disinterested or complacent while three or four million of our young people who are seeking earnestly for work are denied the opportunity of a job, the opportunity to prove their innate capabilities. Nor can anyone feel that all is well with our youth when thousands are denied educational opportunities for financial rather than scholastic reasons, when youth commits three times as many crimes as any other age group.

The National Youth Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps have done splendid work during the last six or seven years. They have blazed new trails of youth service. They have employed at one time or another about five million young people, giving them the opportunity of performing productive work, useful to the

community and providing basic work experience and skills, at wages that have been tremendously helpful to the youth and their families. But, despite the noteworthy accomplishments of both these federal youth service agencies, we must be frank and admit that much has yet to be done before youth's problems can be said to be finally solved. What are the reasons for this? What else can we do? And in what direction shall we proceed? These, as I see it, are some of the vital questions for which this book tries to find an answer.

Ways out of the difficulties faced by youth readily suggest themselves. Totalitarianism is one of the most popular of these. It has an insidious appeal for youth that has been clearly demonstrated in a number of European countries. But it is a blind alley, an illusory hope. It holds out a false sense of security, bought at the tremendous price of losing freedom of thought and action. It is a step back into the Middle Ages, with its dogmas and persecutions and tyrannies. Totalitarianism holds out no real solution for youth's problems, though we can learn much from the analysis of its appeal to youth as presented in this volume.

Any final solution of American youth's problems must be firmly based upon the principles of democracy — the most civilized form of government. This is, admittedly, a tremendous task, calling for a highly educated citizenry that can govern themselves with wisdom and justice. However, there is still room for improvement in the democratic process by which it can be made more efficient, more dynamic and more responsive to the will and the needs of the people. We must make all the improvements we can, both in these forms and in the economic

and social conditions of our country, in order that democracy may remain more than an abstract symbol.

As to the relation of the individual to our democratic society, I have felt for a long time that there should be general recognition of the fact that the day of rugged individualism is over and that the day of collective effort for greater security for more abundant living has arrived, and that that is one of the things we have to bring to the attention of young people so that they may set different standards for success.

I am sure that future values are going to be based on the fact that man cannot work for himself alone, but he can earn more honor where he works for the sake of the community and his fellow human beings.

The future must also necessarily take into account the war now raging in Europe. Whatever the outcome, the experiences of the last World War indicate that the youth returning from the line of battle must go through tremendous readjustments which Americans cannot afford to overlook. The essay by the young Briton indicates remarkable foresight and an indomitable spirit in England which our people doubt, though it alone can heal the battle scars.

Because of its philosophic and analytical approach to one of the most vital problems of our society, I hope this book will be widely read.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

*The White House*  
May 1, 1940



## INTRODUCTION

IN ANY PERIOD of dislocation and change, Youth comes to the fore: its beliefs and habits are no longer shaped according to custom; new forces are invited to compete for the allegiance of mankind's future rulers. This book is brought out with the realization that the problems of today's young men and women are more than the problems of one generation. They constitute an index to the times, and the courage with which we face them must serve as a test of the survival power of our civilization.

In the present period, technological improvements, rapid changes of social and economic conditions, depression, war, the steady undermining of ancient beliefs and customs, have all combined to deprive the younger generation of a secure or a creative place in society. Because of this, it has seemed worth while to review, once more, youth's relation to society, in the broadest sense. And we have asked authorities from academic, professional, and public life to write down what seemed to them the important considerations.

Recent developments abroad have reminded us that young people without roots in the past or substantial hope for the future may, in combination with other dissatisfied elements, disrupt an entire social structure. Surely the signs, both here and abroad, point to a culture crisis of the utmost seriousness. We are entitling our survey, therefore, "an enforced reconnaissance." During military emergencies, commanders occasionally order a "reconnaissance in force." Present-day America has a

similarly urgent need of perspective: we are challenged to meet the domestic problems which confront us as a result of a world crisis. Indeed, our observation flight is provoked by a situation which has in it much of the urgency of war.

The contributors to this volume emphasize different aspects of the problem of a generation in search of significant loyalties. Education suffers no less than economics or government from the lack of a common purpose. The lack of a common purpose leads to a retreat into vague compromise formulae, and these, in turn, add to our difficulties by depriving language itself of the power to convey inspiration. Is it any wonder that youth grows confused or embittered in a world which asks adherence to symbols no longer meaningful?

Surely contemporary Europe is rich in sociological material. The United States is fortunate in that there is yet time to read and profit from the lessons of history. Fearless analysis and self-criticism are as necessary as ever. But — and this is where the excellent habit of tolerance is apt to prove an inadequate weapon — the values of a free society can only be preserved if we are as fearless in reconstruction as we have been in analysis. Palliatives must not be mistaken for solutions. Our country demands positive and constructive institutions; it requires positive and constructive beliefs. And American youth, which is, after all, the hope or the despair of the American future, will remain loyal to the democratic heritage only if there remain reasonable opportunities for service and achievement.

Thirty years ago, William James had the wisdom to urge that the virtues of military life be given an oppor-

tunity to enter into our peacetime labors: the spirit of service and sacrifice displayed on the field of battle would, if applied to civilian purposes, lead to great constructive results. Two years after James's essay, a similar proposal came out in Germany: a young man who had been through the military service proposed a peacetime work army, in order that the youthful energies wasted in preparation for war might be harnessed for the benefit of mankind. It was his tragedy, and James's, that soon afterwards the two countries in which this idea found clear expression were locked in the grim slaughter of the First World War.

To a large extent, the problem posed by William James and Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy in 1910 and 1912 is the problem we are wrestling with today. We are, therefore, reissuing the two documents, *The Moral Equivalent of War* and *A Peace Within*, in the appendix to this book. Perhaps they will broaden our perspective and renew our faith in the ability of human wisdom to meet the necessities of the present situation. The essay which concludes this volume represents a present-day application of the views expressed by James and Rosenstock-Huessy a generation ago. That nature is war eternal, and that peace can only be won by the struggle of men of good will, are truths which need to be articulated in an anarchic age.

THACHER WINSLOW  
FRANK P. DAVIDSON

Washington, D. C.  
May 15, 1940





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PART I

ENFORCED RECONNAISSANCE

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I

## YOUTH AND AUTHORITY

*Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy*

FOR Americans, the title "youth and authority" is a strange pair of words. Authority has no natural place in American tradition. Authority? Europe reveled in authority; America was the El Dorado of non-conformity. In the United States, eighty-four different churches were organized, and twenty-eight separate denominations mustered over one hundred thousand members each. Authorities became as plentiful as blackberries; they were not taken too seriously. Certainly there was little use in taking them with the same deadening earnestness as they were taken in Europe, where one single authority usually held sway over a whole territory to the exclusion of all others.

And what was true in the past seems to be true again today. Again, it is Europe and not America where authority is enthroned. The theme "youth and authority" is timely because of Fascist and Communist trends in the older worlds. Hence, perhaps, yesterday and today differ only in the fact that this time the cry for authority has validity for America also, because of our membership in the Commonwealth of World Humanity. If and when we find that the Mene Tekel from across the Pacific as well as the Atlantic has bearing on a universal and pan-human situation, we may, although reluctantly, have to play ball. However, before we

admit that the topic has meaning for America, we will have to see how heretofore in this country of non-conformism social authority or social discipline has taken shape.

And this is what I propose to do.

Three times America has been faced with the danger of anarchy. Up to the Industrial Revolution, it was religious anarchy. Later on, the danger of educational anarchy had to be overcome. And, in the last decade, we had to make a new start in fighting social anarchy. Hence we may divide our diagnosis into three parts; first, the phase of religious anarchy and dissenters' authorities; second, the phase of educational authority; third, the phase of new social fears. The answer to the latter we shall have to discover as we go along.

#### FIRST PHASE: DISSENTERS' AUTHORITIES

In welding more than one local group together, the energy called authority is indispensable. Its function is to unify different local groups in one spirit. Authority is the power that allows people in different ways of life to turn to one and the same source of inspiration. Since it is a fact that despite our differences in age, color, creed, work and occupation, nation and country, we may be inspired to unanimity, we know of the existence of authority; and perhaps, without the existence of these contradictory qualities, we would not have any use for it. As it stands with us, authority secures the *coöperation of people who differ*, and, for this reason, it is indispensable.

When sects settled on these shores, the question of authority had to be met. After all, these groups of rebels

in religion and politics did not live as lone wolves but as congregations and neighborhoods and companies. All the churches mentioned above administered more than one local center of worship. This they could not have done if they had not wielded some measure of spiritual authority. Personal influence may be held responsible for the cohesion of a purely local group; and being purely personal it may be discounted as a social force, in this connection. The quest for authority gave birth in America to a great variety of types. The father of a Unitarian family, the moderator of a New England Town Meeting, the Irish priest in Lowell, they all had to have different qualities, and all, in turn, differed from the leading "Friend" in the Religious Society of Friends. There was a plenitude of possibilities for authority.

And yet, there were authorities. The history of non-conformism is, in fact, a grand scheme of evolution. All possible forms of authority evolve in one majestic sequence. Each species depended on the specific moment and on the particular social structure of the group in question. When we survey the various authorities of non-conformism, we notice a meaningful Virginia Reel.

The established church of England being the stumbling block for their dissent, the groups that came here first all claimed to be the universal church, too, as Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Congregationalists. Later, however, the groups that immigrated — Moravians, Menmonites, Quakers, Wesleyans, Baptists, Unitarians — were less catholic. They represented the effort of the merchant and the craftsman and the farmer to give expression to their particular callings. No professional way of life remained without satisfaction, in this steady flow of non-

conformism. Although unable to conquer a whole territory to the exclusion of rival denominations, these newer sects enlivened every stratum of society with innate leadership and "intraparietal" authority. Every stratum, thereby, proved its right to mould the life of the spirit.

Now please note that all religion was expressed by Dissenters' authorities in this country. This means that in America even the Greek Catholics and the Roman Catholics are Dissenters when properly understood. The adults that came to these shores did not claim universal acceptance of their particular form of authority. And if the day should come when a religious group in this country forgets the covenant under which it was allowed to establish itself here, and tries to domineer, it will be this group's undoing.

On the other hand, before the Industrial Revolution, these same Dissenters naïvely conceived of their children as having to perpetuate the way of life of their parents. We do not understand Dissenters' authorities without envisaging the combination of dissent among adults and consent between parents and children, within one sect.

I know of a great minister who, in 1934, on his death-bed, in a Pennsylvania village, called for his son, his successor in the ministry, and told him: "My son, we came to this country, two hundred-odd years ago, because we opposed war; it may come to pass that in this country we no longer can live according to our standards; and I hold you responsible for keeping our congregation strong enough so that they, at such a moment, will move on again, to another country." This old minister had not abdicated his absolute authority over his children in religion. We see the fire of the Dissenter

based on the absolute solidarity of generations of fathers and sons, all upholding the same faith, through the centuries.

This combination of dissent and consent was the peculiar way in which the dangers of religious anarchy were overcome. The complete identity of fathers and sons gave such a mighty impetus to the work of the founders that the rivers and rivulets of non-conformism could spread over the whole continent, keeping the souls of men in communion over thousands of square miles of a New World.

With the Industrial Revolution, this flow was stopped. No longer did spiritual authority evolve in new denominational groups. Why was this so? The industrial classes are so uprooted and migrate so fast that they need ready-made institutions which can give them shelter at their arrival and which do not die when the men leave town. Hence, the Episcopal Church, the old stumbling block of the dissenters, can take care of the very poor in this country who are not reached by non-conformism. For successful non-conformism, a social minimum level exists; this level is given by some solidity or continuity of social existence. The churches in down-town New York, for instance, have seen six or seven congregations pass through the district during one century. These caravans of the wage earners of our days are no longer receptive of "dissenter authority." They are not the stuff of which a sectarian group can be made.

#### SECOND PHASE: THE EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITY

After 1850, then, the spirit of man took a new direction. Enthusiastically the people plumped for education.



There never was a more glorious time than this whole century, for the founding of colleges and educational institutions of all descriptions. The sacrifices made by parents to give their children an education became out of scale with economic circumstances. They mortgaged the farm, and Daniel went to college. This financial aspect was not all; in fact, it was the smaller achievement of these new and magnanimous generations of parents. The parents voluntarily stripped themselves of the authority to educate their children in their own faith.

With industry producing an ever-changing environment, parents made the sublime sacrifice: they pushed their children into a new environment where they could never join them. Liberalism is not appreciated as long as we do not perceive the truly spiritual quality of this act. It is less important to investigate the actual achievements of the colleges than to pause before the generosity of the parents.

It may be supposed that in many, many cases the children of John and Sarah Brown did not get their money's worth. However, the parents were rewarded for their faith. For they satisfied their spiritual hunger. They endowed the new temple of education, and they offered their children for service in this temple. Briefly, then, education in the last century took the place of non-conformism. Of course, there have been new sects. And some of them have achieved some success in the proper direction of religion, which is the same in every generation: to keep man the up-hill animal of creation, to oppose the peculiar temptations of the age, its foremost golden-calf philosophy, by voluntary sacrifice. In this way,

Christian Science opposed the cult of the Doctors, Theosophy fought against the arrogance of the White Man, as did the Bahai's. However, they could not hold a candle to the educational movement which was then under way and which became truly universal.

Instead of the Dissenters' many authorities in eighty-four churches, education has gone an appalling length toward conformity. This was possible because parents offered their children, in this first century of the Industrial Revolution, on the assumption that they delivered them *as* children, and as children only. Education had to do with the child. And the parents never, for one moment, doubted that the educational authorities would respect the freedom and independence of the future adult. The new faith in science made possible this surrender of educational authority because it seemed plain that the adults were safeguarded by scientific progress. Since science was going to demonstrate everything as clearly as the fact that two plus two equals four, education was not a danger for the later adult. The parents starved themselves of spiritual fellowship with their children, and gave up all external expression of their own faith in their family. This asceticism of the Liberal has real grandeur.

And in this manner, the temple of education was built and the educational authorities were allowed to rule over the whole youth of the country, despite American non-conformism. Nearly all colleges dropped their denominational requirement. Baptist, Quaker, Lutheran foundations were turned into schools and colleges pure and simple. The merger of educational authorities during

the last decades was as irresistible as the progress of trusts in Oil and Steel.

In a country of non-conformism, obviously a certain price had to be paid for this merger of educational authority. The price was paid by the parents. Their life-problems and they themselves were left out in the cold. Education restricted itself conscientiously to strictly non-parental and non-religious subjects. Educators had to promise not to influence children in any serious matter. With this stipulation, they took over the children of America for all non-serious matters.

This country, after the Civil War, became the country of sports and games to an unheard-of degree. The town meeting, with the authority of the moderator and the selectmen, had been typical for the first period, with its sectarian authorities. Now, from 1850 to 1929, we had the baseball and football authorities of the educational kingdom becoming universal. It is usually forgotten that these extraordinary authorities are of very recent date. But these powers are the logical outcome of a non-conformist society that must make sure that education is play. For otherwise the parents could not trust the new authorities.

Today, America is the country of nearly perfect educational Conformism. Education is the One Established Church of this country. In the famous story of the father who wished to develop characters it made no difference that he sent one son to Harvard, one to Princeton, and one to Yale (and so on and so forth). They all turned out alike.

This conversion to educational conformism is so stupendous that some observers believe the old spirit of

Roger Williams to have vanished completely. I think that the clear restrictions on educational conformism have in them the germ of a new development.

Parents built up the Moloch of educational conformism; they, however, made sure that his kingdom should keep the character of a playground in which nothing is quite serious except football. The innumerable flow of examinations in itself proves this. In any serious course of instruction, this infinitude of examinations would seem ridiculous. As things stand, these examinations are the minimum of seriousness, in a sheltered park of gaiety and games. And the alumni go there, and delight in playing golf and watching football.

The American alumnus has an enviable resilience; he is rejuvenated when he returns to the alma mater because he conforms to the play-character of the educational authority. On campus, all agree about the rules of the game. Outside, there is no authority. As an adult, as a parent, the alumnus lives under the excessive strain of "unchartr'd freedom."

### THIRD PHASE: THE TEMPTATIONS OF FEAR

Today, two periods of American spiritual evolution ask for synthesis. The first phase experimented with all forms of spiritual authority freely, keeping the goal universal for all mankind. The second phase unified spiritual authority for the children. The reader is not expected to agree to our thesis that the second period is doomed. From the viewpoint of happiness and carefree health, American youth should go on in its innocent paradise. My thesis is only true in so far as the reader may agree that the American adult no longer can afford

to live in a spiritual void. Is the void for the adult becoming intolerable? Is the helplessness of our attitude in this world crisis significant? Do our clubs, conventions, conferences, lack inspiration? After all, authority comes from man's capacity of bowing to inspiration.

This capacity makes man man. And therefore, the whole issue is brought to a head in the case of the unfortunate hybrid whom we may label "the youthful adult," the tramp, the unemployed, the uneducated boy between fifteen and twenty-four. For in his case the two qualities of an uninspired adult and of an uneducated youth are fused. Physiologically, the boy could be in college but is not; and therefore he is not in the park of games; economically, though treated by society as an adult, he lacks all the rewards of a man at work, and thus he is caught in the situation of those whom the famous psychologist Jung described as "Men in Search of a Soul," which former generations might have called the limbo of the souls unborn.

Not for the sake of the child, but for the sake of the adult, serious authority and serious inspiration become a challenge again. Owing to this challenge cheap solutions are offered everywhere. We get Fascism for the adult (of which Communism is one variety). The adults are narcotized by good cheer as though they were boys on campus and at games. Our new *panes et circenses* means that the educational park is enlarged till it contains all and everybody. The opposite reform tries to place the college student in the same world as the adult. He is challenged, even as a freshman, to live in the debunked, skeptical void of non-inspiration, of "no authority," in which the average business man of fifty must

live at this moment. Students are told to work out their own salvation. This leads to suicide when it is carried out fully; fortunately, in most cases, the social activities on campus offset this overtaxing of the strength of youth.

The colleges that are wrestling with the process, and the political fronts that try to get the formation of some common will started among adults, labor under terrible handicaps. And I am not in a position to ridicule their endeavors, since I feel that Communism and Fascism, for the adult, and progressive education, for youth, both are symptoms of a real disease. The common will, the general will, public opinion, no longer work except in a negative way. Prohibition of liquor, prohibition of political inspiration, are the only potentialities for common action among the voters, it would seem. And, on the other hand, the playboy attitude begins to look frivolous in this unending outer and inner crisis, and the educational success seems somehow a social failure. And so some educators grow too serious.

My own conception differs from both these reforming groups, the authoritarian for the adult, and the individualistic, for the young; and, I trust, the reader's conception may differ also, now that he has looked back upon the two previous periods and their achievements. We cannot extinguish them, and we cannot stop at them. And when we face the past bravely, we usually find that it asks neither for repudiation nor for repetition. We are faced with a new problem that never bothered our forefathers; hence the solution must be new, too. Our situation is neither one of educational zest nor of ecclesiastical organization as it was for the college founders and the Dissenters. Ours is a world in which the adult is living

in a spiritual void. This spiritual void becomes especially transparent in the case of the youthful adult, the unemployed youth. When we concentrate on this weak point of our civilization and explore its potentialities, the two patent solutions — political totalitarianism for the adult, educational loneliness for the child and adolescent — will not tempt us. We won't find them on our way, at all. The man who says "All children play in uniformity; therefore, all adults must work in uniformity," does not know of the sacrifice made by the parents of the last century. He wants to strip parents of the last remains of personality which are left, after their abdication from parental authority. The man who says "Let every child become serious, and discover the world all for himself and work out his own salvation," surely does not know of the sacrifices made by the Dissenters for having communion with kindred souls. He does not exploit the social energy of inspiration.

Both groups are symptomatic for crisis since they react against the existing work and education; however, they seem to me, despite their genuine commotion, too much overcome by fear. They are reacting, not responding. The only difference between mechanic reaction and spontaneous response in this law-governed universe seems to me to consist in our privilege of overcoming our blind fear that everything is lost. We may open our eyes instead of going blind. Of course we are in a certain kind of world that is not of the making of our generation: there is no doubt that we are not free to choose our world. In this sense, we, too, are obliged to act under the impact of the new social disorder. Yet, a response differs widely from a reaction. Whereas the Fascist or Communist or

progressive educator hates the new facts—insecurity, unemployment, lack of spiritual authority—and tries to extirpate them by violent measures either in economics or in education, the response to a new situation exploits the potentialities of the new situation. Instead of deploring it as merely negative, the response transforms a seemingly negative situation into the basis for a new position and a reconstruction. A response, instead of a reaction, must welcome the fact that we do our work with fewer workers, it must cease to see in the unemployed person a man cursed by fate, unappetizing, to be pitied and to be put on relief. A response must take the first tentative steps toward making the disease of the times the cornerstone of a healthy future. The unemployed are an asset, and not a liability.

Shaking off our animal fear that everything must be lost, we may immediately realize one outstanding fact. In the youth of the country we also have the future adult. The primitive idea that children should be treated like adults, or adults like children, is the superstition of an era that tried to think of man as having one constant nature. The progressive educators wish to think of man as reasonable and creative always; the Fascists love to picture him as mass-man and unreasonable only. This black-and-white psychology is just like saying that man is always awake or that he is always asleep. Our human problem, obviously, is that we do wake up and do fall asleep, at regular intervals. And the simple fact that the child is the father of the man, or that the man is the son of the child, should help us in our new synthesis. This synthesis can never extirpate one half of our nature in favor of the other.



Since we discover that in every human being, at any moment, two generations are present, their contemporaneity — the transition from one into the other phase, their proper balance — becomes essential. We must be childlike and manlike, both, through life.

As the potential adult, the college student or any youth of twenty cannot be satisfied either with his being treated as a child or with his being treated as an adult, only. His great problem is transition, growth, transformation. And the laws for growth and transformation have nothing to do with science or logic or economics or reason. As an animal of constant transition, man has to be trusted — without the blinds of the scientific age, and without the prohibitions of a patriarchal age.

As the future adult, the adolescent cannot be satisfied, for instance, with the spiritual authority of playground education. Campus authorities have no authority over later life because the athletic association umpire has become their god. They train people to find arguments in favor of anything.

This viewpoint actually is the basis of modern teaching. Some call it scientific. In the fifth century B.C., it was called sophistry. This is the time of the Sophists again because teaching is a mere imitation of the sports. The academic life of today, though borrowing its name from Plato, is as antiplatonic as possible.

What else can the modern teacher do but conform to the rules of the educational game? And that means that he must remain non-committal. He must degrade his living word to a means for the student's pleasure. Some months ago, in a student paper, the professor was attacked in these terms: "Where the Word has power,

education must suffer." This is the best expression of the students' fear that ideas might gather momentum and authority over them. They understand by education: playing with ideas. What a horrid phrase! This is the self-abuse that emasculates our teaching.

The result is that for the playboy in the student the inspiration comes from his social sports and games, not from teaching. But whence does the inspiration come for the boy who is father to the man?

The fortitude of the parents of the last century consisted in their putting up with spiritual starvation, for their children's sake. Once these children are revealed as potential parents themselves, this solution (Solitude for the adult + Educational conformity for the child) becomes meaningless. For the child, too, is deprived of something in this sacrifice of his elders. His own status as an elder is compromised when society relegates every adult into a private religion and a private opinion.

We remember that the parents were led to their surrender of communion with their children under the pressure of scientific progress. We are no longer sure that science is a leader, in an era of poison gas and air raids. Our faith in science has been tempered by disillusion.

We consider the child as trying to grow out of his neutral, unhistorical stage into public life, public spirit, and public responsibility. Or, as Étienne Gilson has put it eloquently: "Twenty years is an age that thirsts after certitudes; it is an age when one wishes to devote oneself to an ideal; and to find an ideal to which one can devote oneself. We are at the crossroads: we must reestablish a real order or succumb to a dictatorship, whether Communist or Fascist."

What Gilson calls an order to be reëstablished is nothing but the proper relation between the generations in a people.

In any community, the hearts of the parents and the hearts of their children must be turned towards each other, by a special effort. Because the spirit of the times estranges us from each other, this is neither natural nor easy. It was, in fact, deemed so exceedingly difficult that it was proclaimed at the end of the Old Testament the last and final social program. The last words of the last prophet say that this problem must be solved, or the world will decay.

Since that time this mutual regard has formed the problem of every generation in history. The Christian Era has been one campaign for relating parents and children, the young and the old, in the proper way, again and again. And we relapse out of this era into paganism when we no longer try to solve this same problem for our times.

In our era, more and more liberty has been given to the inspiration of the young. The son, again and again, has been put up against mere paternal authority or patriarchal tradition. We are emerging from a period in which progress ran away with us quite literally; and that meant that the parents abdicated in favor of their children. They became satisfied with being their children's best friends. Now, whatever the merits of friendship, friendship stresses the contemporary element in human relations. A friend, the more he is my friend, is synchronized with my own life-experience.

Unfortunately, parents are dis-temporaries of their children. And children are dis-temporaries of their par-

ents. The children are full of faith when the parents are — or should be — full of knowledge. The young keep the world young by their faith; the old keep it in shape by their having come to know it.

This partnership is hard to establish to perfection. However, in the last three generations, the slogan of friendship has overshadowed the problem of peace between different generations who pass through their experiences at different times, and yet must make these experiences with full vigor. It has made the old childish, and the young skeptical.

We have reached the turning point of the Christian Era, in which the son must rise not against his father but against his being condemned to be a son always. The sons — the unemployed, the proletarians, the college students, the clerks at their desks, the employees in their workshops — must ask for opportunities to come of age, to become parents. And daughters must become mothers. We strip the son and the daughter of their office and dignity when we label them boy and girl too exclusively. Daughters and sons must become mothers and fathers; girl and boy may stay childish forever.

And we become parents in a mental sense when we are expected and enabled to carry out the inspiration of our youth, and to transform the faith of our youth into our acts and knowledge of later years.

#### EMERGING AUTHORITY

We must provide for the future adult an education that makes him experience "emerging inspiration," emerging authority. He must experience the power that binds together a man's youth and old age because it is more

powerful than the expression that it finds in either youth or old age. Old age must see its ideas incarnated, and youth must hear its faith reflected in old age's thought.

This reciprocity between the contributions of two "dis-temporary" generations, faith by youth, and thought by old age, is in sharp contrast to the principles of the Age of Reason. The Age of Reason overlooked the division of labor between the generations in a nation. They actually tried to bind old and young together on the basis of rational principles shared by both.

However, any man, at any moment, may convince himself in the outside world that youth and old age have contrasting attitudes towards time which rightly are called faith and knowledge, and which make it natural that a young and an old man fulfill the same social function — one when he acts on faith, the other when he acts on science. For instance, a youthful person will give his time more lavishly because he still has time. The adult will try to save time because his faith in the future has shriveled up. The adult's life is encumbered with his plans and actions from the past; his future is more or less dependent on his knowledge gained in the past. For the youth, faith in the future colors everything which he brings into life from his background. To him, the future may change the meaning of his whole past. He is free to disown or to disavow parts or all of his past.

The relation between science and faith in a people is, then, much more organic than the scientific era knew. The young feel, and the grown up think, about the same problem. And both groups are equally near to it, but through different organs of grasping.

Unemployment is as real and as immediate to the young

as it is to their teachers or employers. Woe to the parent generation that does not think as ardently as the young feel, in this impasse. But woe to the young generation, too, that is advised to play at games or — the other extreme — to play “Youth Congress” like adults.

To proclaim the immediate relation of every generation to the aims of mankind is rank heresy to the mind that takes its cue from science. Here, faith in the progress of science has taught people to think of the generations of scientists as following each other in a straight line, in which the next generation picked up the problems exactly where the last generation left off; and so the young had better play 'round, and wait till their day came. This kind of progress or tradition is true to a certain extent, within one separate profession, such as carpentry, or chemistry. It is quite untrue when a whole civilization is at stake, as is proved in any great emergency, be it war, flood, or fire.

Then every one must play his part, according to his generation.

Hence, if we should model the behavior of youth in society after the behavior of the scientific apprentice, we would blunt its sense of justice and its faith in the future and its creative power of response. But why say that we “would” blunt? Actually, these senses are blunted today, by our education. Actually, we do tell our children that the evils of society will have to be solved one day by scientific exploration and reasonable debate. Of course they never will be solved this way.

Each generation is immediate to God, and in every generation we must come in touch with inspiration — as youths in the form of faith and enthusiasm, as adults in

the form of action and knowledge — and because there actually is a third generation, as old people in the form of wisdom and teaching.

The young have to fight the battles of society in the form that is adequate to their age, by service and devotion; the adult do the same, by expert knowledge. Now the scientific era excluded the children from the field of action because it was thought that all human action should wait till it could be based on expert knowledge. There is one flaw in this system of the past era. Expert training may not be acquired except by exposing our heart muscle to experience. Experience that is valuable comes from empirical processes that get started in us by the imperatives of our hearts. Young people are as near the social danger zone that forces man to grow as are the old. And they must train their instincts, their heart, their "response," by claiming for their faith contemporaneity with the expert's science. Because many scientists have neglected this interplay, their sciences are far behind the times. Youth *feels* as wisely about economics as old age *thinks*.

Of course, this attitude of mere feeling is very one-sided; it is instinctive. However, without these instincts, society would be just as certainly doomed as without the expert knowledge. In fact, expert knowledge that remains uninstructed about the right feeling by the young, and that, as it does today, declines this instruction, will turn out to be sterile. And it will lead us into blind alleys.

To train feeling and to trust the faith of the young is as important as to trust in reason and to train for science. And the training ground for feeling is service. Thirty years ago William James lifted his voice to talk about a

moral equivalent for war. His essay foresaw some service that would knock the childishness out of our bones, that would verify the instinctive feeling for society by a distinct experience in society. *La Enciclopedia Italiana* quotes this essay by James as the most remarkable prose document of American literature. Yet, till today, the people to whom he spoke have not heeded his challenge.

Service in youth, spontaneous service, without the orders of any visible authority, has been the privilege of volunteers, in any period of history. These volunteers have always made history. And rightly so. For the repetition of cause and effect, in society, is purely mechanical. And in this cycle of birth and death, there is no place for inspiration, no need for authority. Authority is absent from a society in which everything is recurrent. Authority is indispensable when we must *rebuild* society. The volunteers are the ones that heed the new voice first, the new authority, long before it is in the telephone book. They receive it into their system, by a voluntary response to an emergency, to a social scandal, a social evil that they know must be conquered. And nothing that has not been started by volunteers enters the halls of human history.

Youths may become the equals of their parents, through voluntary service. Voluntary service of the college student would compel the experts to ascribe value to the instinctive faith of youth. And in this way, the experts would be forced to shelve obsolete problems which today keep thousands of teachers of the "social sciences" in mental slavery.

Because the volunteer serves before any authority is established by law, it becomes clear that the authority



that commands his service is no legal authority. The response of the volunteer guarantees to our laws and organization their true origin in inspiration. If the Constitution and the laws and the customs of a civilization were all destroyed, volunteers could restore them, without visible authority, just like that; and thereby they would prove the justice, the health, the reincarnative character of their society.

The contribution of youth to authority, this time, widely differs from its role in the past. Then, Dissenters could introduce children and grandchildren into their pattern of life, under ancestral authority; and later, educators could stamp their equalizing mark on all contemporary children of America, class after class.

Both times authority moulded the young. Now, however, the parents have lost their faith in any authorization. They do not feel authorized to prescribe anything to their children, in faith or values. The young must trust their faith, their belief in a future in America and of America, by service on a colossal scale. To serve means to extend our feelers. And so the relation between the feeling of youth and service becomes clear. After the impoverishment of youth's feelings by the Age of Reason, service enables them to restore their power to feel and their confidence in feeling.

I think that this sketch answers the anxious question whether this country must turn Fascist or Communist. There is nothing in American tradition or in the American present that will give these forces a chance unless the trust in feeling and volunteering remains choked, among the young. This country steers towards the rediscovery of the spiritual origin of all authority. The

pundits of science or the pedants of religion may block this for a time, but not forever.

Authority is the electric current that connects all ages. The Age of Reason served the reason of one age only; and authority became meaningless. Before this age, however, for six thousand years sons served in armies while daughters served at home, and through their services in war and peace social anarchy was conquered.

Modern society must put its economy on a mature footing to the extent that the young become an asset as volunteers instead of a liability as job-hunters. Experts may quench the scorching flames of a social fire. But it is the young who will have to water the scorched earth; and in turning their hearts towards the worries of their dispirited elders, the young will restore the meaning of authority.

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## II

### THE LESSON OF EUROPE

*Reginald Henry Phelps*

**D**URING the dreariest months of the depression, the magazine *Americana* carried a page of pictures showing young men fighting with charging police. Each picture was captioned "Student Demonstration" — in Greece, in Italy, and so on. Down in one corner of the page was a photograph of a smooth young fellow self-consciously operating a new vacuum cleaner, while a pretty housewife watched. Caption: "Student Demonstration in America."

This was a deservedly cutting comment on the lack of political interest of American youth. On the other hand, it showed in some degree the sour-grapes attitude frequently found in critics who chide other people for not doing something they are lucky enough not to need to do. Germans, under the Weimar Republic, used to express scorn for a political system like the American, in which there appeared to exist no basic difference between the two parties. Consider, they said, how ridiculous that is, when every one of the several dozen parties in the Reich has a profound *Weltanschauung*, and can justify on philosophical grounds its anarchism or monarchism or collectivism or individualism or dictatorial intentions! Whereas, they went on, the lines between Republicans and Democrats blur and waver; a few jobs

more promised here or there, a slogan like "Two cars in every garage," can shift the voters, who are selfish and have no *Weltanschauung*, one way or the other. It seems that such objections, however well taken philosophically, are little justified in reality. A government like that of the German Republic, in which parties either diverged fundamentally (and therefore were unable to compromise), or else were the grossest kind of lobbies, cannot in the long run work; while a country in which a substantial agreement exists on those very fundamentals over which the Germans quarreled should not need to be purged by revolution every few generations. And that substantial agreement did, and doubtless still does, exist in the United States; partly because, by good fortune, this country was founded on a workable agreement about fundamentals; partly because, by further good fortune, our society was flexible and inclusive, and we could find in its broad frame a place reasonably satisfactory, on the whole, for each group and each individual. (This may help to explain, if not to excuse, the young man with the vacuum cleaner.)

The subject of this essay is one of these groups, youth; the question it asks is whether that broad framework praised a few lines back, and that substantial and workable agreement, are likely to continue in the United States, or whether, in fact, they are not already showing signs of cracks that may widen dangerously, as they did in Europe. Something can be deduced as to possible developments here by a survey of what has happened to European youth in the past forty years.

The most significant phenomenon among European youth in that time was the Youth Movement, strongest

in Germany, important generally in Central and Eastern Europe, and only slightly effective in England and France. The movement had a multiple personality, hard to define in positive terms, though a few general statements at least can be made about it. It began, in its most modern form, in North Germany, first as a protest of young students against the dull routine of bourgeois life and education; against the lack of understanding for youth as a period of life having value in itself (not as a time for training little grownups!), and against the stereotyped formalities of Prussian schoolmasters.

In other words, these youngsters found no place for themselves in that society. They revolted, at first by flight into the romance of wandering, of freedom and a return to nature; later, seeing a duty to remake the world they had hated into something alive and noble, they inclined toward positive idealism. Much of this idealism — whose results were strangely miscalculated by impressionable foreigners — was transmuted in strange ways, as will be shown later. But it seems to me to have been a quality intensely desirable in itself.

To return to America, and the present. Thus far, this country has never seen anything comparable to the German youth movement. The reason lies only partly in innate differences between Central European youth and ours — their tendency to philosophize, for instance, to consider such abstractions as “freedom” and “nation” from a standpoint reached through tortuous study of the organic view of history. Equally important is the difference in milieu. One of the soundest students of the German youth movement, Charlotte Lütken, shows that in the Anglo-Saxon countries, and similarly in France,

youth in the late nineteenth century regarded itself, and was regarded, as a part of the nation, sharing its common traditions and its "style of life." Thus, a natural basin existed in those countries to catch the enthusiasms and energies of youth; among them "there is still, for the young generation, a future within the frame that their fathers set up."

But what if the surety of that frame is gone? What if a generation ready to join in the common traditions and style of life of America finds that these have moved out of its reach and seem likely to remain there?

Under those not wholly hypothetical circumstances, one of two developments is probable. Either the cheated generation will accept its fate, and descend into serf-like apathy; or its temper will rise, and it will take by force what it has been deprived of.

In the last analysis, most of us would prefer to see the second happen rather than the first. Granted that the present crisis has not progressed far enough to make a choice between the two necessary, we still are entitled to take thought to prevent a time from coming when it may be necessary. We may imagine that the old road of golden opportunities has grown rougher, that the holes in it are becoming deeper and muddier, that it may run into a dead end. We can see signs of discouragement among those for whom the going is hardest, and we may find that this discouragement turns into the sort of desperation that welcomes any experiment promising a way to rich rewards. If this is so, we had better see to it that the road gets essential repairs, and that it appears once more to be leading somewhere.

In other words, a "youth movement" of a dangerous

type may rise here, a perfectly natural reaction to present apathy. It would be wiser to consider a program in advance of the danger than to let the movement run away with itself as it did in Europe.

## II

Of course, "youth movements" have come and gone for over a century of modern history, and something like them can be traced back as far as one wants, in special fields like art and literature and music. Not until the nineteenth century, however, did they assume, on a large scale, social-political form. They appeared in Germany during the wars against Napoleon, for instance, as the *Turner* groups of old Father Jahn — gymnastic associations, which, like the Slavic *Sokols* after them, concealed patriotic aims. But the *Burschenschaften*, student societies at the German universities, usually figure as the most important early example of these movements. They rose among the patriotic youth who had interpreted the struggle against Napoleon as a national rather than a dynastic war; who had left lecture-rooms to don uniforms, had fought heroically — and then had returned to find that their governments purposed to wipe out the years since 1789, and settle back into the old comfortable and aimless existence. The democratic ideas of the French Revolution had penetrated deep into that age, and these men, foes of Napoleonic France, fused curiously the democratic ideals of the French Revolution with the mystic-organic view of the nation that Herder and the German Romanticists had evoked.

So the *Burschenschaften* themselves played at revolution, organized in secret when they were banned in pub-

lic, stormed against tyrants and censorship, and generally prepared for the attacks on the old regime that came in 1830, and again, far more forcefully, in 1848. (It is interesting to observe that German nationalism would not have developed in quite the way it has if a certain Karl Follen had never existed — a student at Giessen who later went to Basel, directed a mysterious "League of Youth" in Germany, and had to flee to America, where he became the first teacher of German at Harvard and was finally honored by having a Cambridge street named for him!)

The 1830's and 1840's were decades of youth movements in the unformed nations of Europe. They had not-dissimilar aims, whether they were the Young Italy of Mazzini, or the Young Germany of Börne and the poet Heine — or even the groups of Young Poles, Young Serbs, and so on, who did not achieve such wide fame as their colleagues in Western Europe. Often liberal republicans, usually (though this is less true of the Young German radicals) violent nationalists, these groups sprang up in nations that had not won political unity, that were socially inflexible, and in the hands of governments that clung to frayed political patterns.

In those years, youth revolted against tyranny exerted by governments. The twentieth century has seen youth revolting against traditional individual freedom, because it saw no way to use that freedom, which it finally began to consider as the false front behind which was hidden the tyranny of money.

The youth movement proper, beginning in the 1890's in Germany, started its development in less clearly political channels than its predecessors. A long period of



national success had intervened. Germany, excluding Austria, was unified, powerful, and rich; and, in the excitement of the great moments under Bismarck, and of the boom years after the war with France, people had not found much time to think of their souls. For a while this materialism satisfied the Germans; and, in fact, without the fanfares of Nietzsche against the bourgeois nineteenth century, a sort of bovine contentment with things as they were might have lasted indefinitely. But this philosopher of heroism looked at his time, and found it wanting; looked at the Germans, and found them a sorry lot — lacking a genuine style of living, soaked in soulless materialism, and willing to let the mechanical State put them through its meaningless routine.

This philosophic preparation, combined with German history, explains a great deal of the nature of the German youth movement. From Nietzsche, it learned contempt for the ideology of its age, for the society that had bred it; moreover, the movement derived from Nietzsche the ideal figure of the great individual, along with a dangerous disdain for traditional morality. He, and such contemplative German patriots of those years as Lagarde and Langbehn, *expressed* what youth *felt* to be wrong with the age. Nietzsche could supply real nobility of aim for the noble; or he, the revaluer of all values, could be used to excuse the vilest transgressions of the ignoble. In any case, further familiarity with his work drew the youth movement from its first negative romanticism to confidence that the age could be repaired. The *Bohémiens* in the movement continued to wander, singing to their guitars; the rest advanced toward an intellectual — or better, an anti-intellectual — revolution, certain that

the world could be made over only by a change in mankind, and that this change would come from knowing the primitive realities of life rather than from cogitation in classrooms.

At the same time, the youth movement became agitated by a kind of nationalism noted occasionally before in Germany — based on the concept of the nation as an organism, with each individual a member — and the conclusion that the community (*Gemeinschaft*) is essential, with the individual a part of it neither equal nor free.

Now perhaps we can see where this is tending. The revolt is already there, still half-concealed; a revolt against bourgeois standards and ideals, materialism and individual freedom, conventional morality; a revolt on behalf of the basic right to life of the generation and the nation — still in a half-mystic, half-social form, with little political direction.

In this condition, the youth movement was engulfed by the World War, with profound effects. In the first place, the vague early collectivism was made specific — in a sort of reforming patriotism, the will to remake the nation, to give political form to dreams. Secondly, this zeal for activity laid the movement open to political manipulators. So much enthusiasm at white heat! So much searching for a way to apply it! Uncritical, youth was willing to run after charlatans and worse, who promised that they would find the key to the new world. Glorifying in this emotional servitude, youth was content to let the new master lead wherever he would. The old political parties wooed and petted the youngsters; the new radicalisms, national and international, found support among youth for their extremist programs.

Third, the War struck down a great part of a generation of German youth. Normally, the men born in the 1890's would by 1920 have grown more sober after their stirred youth, and would perhaps have changed from revolutionary to reformist ideas, with at least the possibility of a smooth transition between the old regime, by now aware of its sins, and the new. Instead, this half-grown generation had been decimated. Its remnants returned, with some hopes, from the War. They found the old generation hugging their places in politics and business, doing lip service to the new social-revolutionary ideals; they found a new generation of youth, needing both leadership from men slightly older, and sympathy for the ideals of the youth movement, which by then had captured most young Germans. And there were not enough young men in the middle generation to form a bridge between the two ages.

The story of the youth movement in the 1920's can be briefly told. It seemed to have swept the nation, its members (including the youth organizations of political parties, trade unions, and churches) were counted in millions. It was lauded and imitated abroad. But in a way its triumph was hollow, for these new unwieldy groups were largely the property of special interests, who were training up voters or church-goers, and naturally kneaded the movement's ideals to suit their purposes. The interests had evidently learned how to handle youth, they spoke the right catchwords, and took over the frames of organization that the movement itself had built up.

Among these, the interest that finally won German youth was the Nazi party, the political group that offered a program nearest to the heart of the youth movement.

Not only the externals — swastika symbols and Heil-greetings — came to the Nazis from the youth movement; so too did much of the party's social-nationalist ideology, their Führer-and-following mysticism, and so on. But the most striking point is this: The almost complete surrender of German youth to the Nazi party did not come till after three breakdowns of German national morale, and of international economics. The post-war revolution of 1918-19, the inflation and civil strife of 1923, and the catastrophe of 1930-32 had to come first. They proved, in the eyes of German youth, that there was no hope in reform; that total revolution against the old world was needed; and that this revolution should follow the lines long since laid down by the youth movement.

## III

The German youth movement has received special emphasis here, not only because it is by far the most important among such movements and has accomplished the most sensational results, but also because it offers some analogies to American developments. The very special conditions faced in Eastern Europe by the Slavic *Sokols* and the nationalist youth of other small nations, and the development of the proletarian youth movements throughout Europe, do not have the same bearing on current American problems as the German movement, rising, as it did, from the young middle class of the nation.

To be sure, the differences between the American situation and the German are even more obvious than the likenesses. American youth does not enter its present difficulties with a historical-philosophical background

like that of Germans in the 1890's or 1920's. No Nietzsche has proclaimed the overthrow of ordinary American standards (though a cynical immoralism exists that is no less dangerous); no Herder has replaced our idea of the state as the product of a compact of individuals by the conception of the organic *Volk*.

Neither have we seen a whole generation attack American ideas of what is generally desirable in government and life, as the pre-war youth movement assaulted the German nineteenth century. Nor has this country been shattered by war, and lost half a generation of men, like Germany. Nor have we, except in 1931-32, gone through an immense depressive strain on our national morale, as the Germans did three times in a dozen years.

Yet a prophet of gloom could find some material for claiming that we are, in relation to youth, now more or less where Germany was in the 1890's. He might say that we have lost the customary means of welding youth into the nation, that we are offering to a vast part of this generation only temporary relief, with no guarantee that they will not remain permanently among the dispossessed. Or he could hold that we had our moral breakdown in the purple twenties, when American materialism outdid its own past record and that of nineteenth-century Europe as well. Or that the deep depression of eight years ago has only become one somewhat shallower, out of which youth does not seem to be climbing. In summary, he could say that the human stock is there for an overturn of America's placid life — men discontented, without a place fixed for them in their own home; that a sharpened crisis could destroy the remaining hopes and inhibitions that have kept us, so far, comparatively safe. We do not have a tradition of Prussian militarism for an

American type of Fascism or Nazism to use in its appeal to youth; but we have one of vigilantism that might become just as bad.

It may be that we are justified in looking on the problem of a place for American youth as something fleeting, to be viewed in terms of relief, and of keeping the boys off the streets. But, to judge from the experience of Europe, we could hardly go further wrong. There is reason to doubt that the economic situation we are supposed to be meeting by these methods will improve quickly or fundamentally. Even if it did, the social problem would remain; a place must be found for millions now, and for their younger brothers a few years from now. The framework for building such a place may exist already in such institutions as CCC or NYA; but it cannot be used effectively unless the philosophy behind those institutions is changed from that of temporary relief. And there is one more obvious, but often forgotten, point: This young generation will, before many years, be a middle-aged generation. Its views and capacities are being determined in large part by its experiences during the years of life ordinarily devoted to high school and college. If it is not sanely guided now, either it will disintegrate, or it will follow those who see their advantage in guiding it some other way. Reason no doubt drops from the lips of our youth congresses and student unions, but they have tended to preach civil liberties to their own kind, rather than — in the fine phrase of the Russian intelligentsia — “going to the people.” Similar white-collared missionaries among German youth had only a passing effect. Sitting in the ivory tower will not, in an emergency, prevail against the conning-tower crowd of incipient dictatorship.

### III

## YOUTH IN CRISIS

*Thacher Winslow*

YOUTH faces a changing and troubled world. Each day sees the ancient certainties crumbling rapidly into dust. The convictions of today are the shattered illusions of tomorrow. It is almost impossible to plan ahead. There is virtually no such thing as a secure belief, a secure program, a secure future, or a secure job. Skepticism, nihilism, Machiavellianism, war, widespread unemployment, are all too often the order of the day.

That youth should have problems is not to be wondered at. Some of these it possesses in common with adults. But even these affect the youth group with a special urgency and oppression. Unemployment, for example, is a serious obstacle to most adults; but to youth the obstacle is magnified in seriousness by lack of experience and skills. Adults, too, may be confused by the undermining of ideals and traditional beliefs; but their education and training and experience have given them some basis upon which to pass judgments, while youth tends to enter the world without even this residue of experience to use in making up its mind. This is why the dictator or the demagogue, who has definite convictions and sets them forth persuasively through all the modern methods of propaganda, has been able to win youth quickly to his side. Idealistic and eager youth

leaps for a certainty, for a cause. The fact that these may involve a radical change in the established order of things is only the more enticing to young people who have a bleak future if the world stays as it is, but who may be able to rise to the top, as they have done in Germany and Italy, if conditions are basically changed.

There is no reason to suppose that American youth will be any more immune to the appeal of the dictator than the youth of other countries — particularly if youth is denied educational and job opportunities to an unusual degree. Propaganda analysis and the usual methods of education for democracy will have comparatively little effect on the boy who wants a job, who is ambitious to get ahead, or who can't afford to continue in school or college long enough to get a sound education.

American youth is, on the whole, already apathetic and drifting. This is obviously a dangerous situation. Normally, youth is alert, eager, and idealistic. But however listless young people may appear now, they have the potentialities of being aroused by the person or by the situation that strikes the right note. If a rosy future is held out to them, if honor and glory are promised them, if their lives are given a definite purpose and meaning, then our young people will promptly be stirred to action and may even go to the extreme of partisanship as a reaction against such a prolonged and abnormal period of apathy. As an immediate and not at all unlikely possibility, the prospect of war should have a tremendous appeal to millions of our youth. Despite the fact that they will have to do the fighting and the dying, they will also have a chance to perform the heroic deeds.

New opportunities for youth in peaceful and useful



pursuits must be opened up. Millions of unemployed young people are a real menace to American democracy; in fact, much more of a menace than a possible enemy overseas. The price for giving them employment and hope for the future can hardly be too great. Trapped in the No-Man's Land of unemployment and idleness while proceeding from school to private employment, these young people must be rescued by their friends before they fall prisoner to the enemy.

It is foolish to maintain that young persons can get jobs if they only try hard enough. Most of those people who point out how *they* found jobs when *they* were fifteen or sixteen forget that this wasn't at all an exceptional accomplishment back in 1900 or 1910. In the latter year about 50 per cent of the fifteen-year-old boys had jobs. Today only a few per cent of the fifteen-year-olds hold down jobs in private employment.

The last thirty or forty years have exerted a revolutionary effect on the life of our youth. The average boy of sixteen was in many respects an adult back in 1910. He had a job; he was standing on his own feet and paying his own way; and he was already thinking of saving money so that he could get married. By 1940, all this had changed. Instead of about 60 per cent, we now have only about 9 per cent of our sixteen-year-old boys fully employed, and another 10 per cent partly employed — and a large number of these are employed as unpaid laborers on their fathers' farms.<sup>1</sup> Our youngsters — especially

<sup>1</sup> The Department of Agriculture has estimated that the number of unpaid family farm laborers increased from 1,659,792 in 1930 to 4,273,000 in 1935. Yet, even in 1930, 37 per cent of all the gainfully employed boys from fifteen to nineteen were farm laborers — by far the largest

those under twenty — can't get regular paid jobs; they are not able to stand on their own feet with an income of their own. They are dependents — which is a particularly demoralizing position for a naturally ambitious and energetic group. For all that the plight of our old-age dependents commands our sympathies, old people aren't thwarted to the extent or to the degree of our youth. Their energies have slackened; and their ambitions have either been realized or transferred to their children.

Briefly, what has happened is this. The ambition of mankind to free men and women from the drudgery of labor is being realized with comparative rapidity. As hours of work have been saved, as improvements in the means of production and distribution have displaced labor, the social and economic structure has been forced to adjust itself to quickly changing conditions. These adjustments have been difficult to achieve without hardship and injustices. The economic system has demanded not only that hours of work be cut down but that labor be displaced. This labor displacement naturally proceeded along the lines of least social resistance. First of all, an aroused public opinion against child labor made it logical and just to ban children from jobs. When as much child labor as possible was displaced, the social structure began to give way in the old-age segment, with retirement plans and old-age pensions becoming popular. A point was reached, however, where it was found easier

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job classification — and since that time the percentage has probably increased as a result of the continued curtailment of migration from farm to city.

to keep those people out of jobs who had never had them than to fire men and women who had worked hard and faithfully for many years and who had families to support. Labor displacement therefore swung back to the lower age brackets; and the youth of sixteen and over began to feel its effects. Thus the Biggers Census found that the number of young men from fifteen to nineteen who were totally unemployed (1,984,000) was greater than the total number of men over forty-five who were unemployed (1,715,000). In a comparison of unemployed by age groups, according to the proportion of persons employed or available for employment, the fifteen to nineteen group was by far the largest — 41 per cent as compared with the twenty to twenty-four group, which was second largest, with 24 per cent, and the fifty-five to sixty-four group which was next in line with 20 per cent.

The only alternative to unemployment for youth denied entrance to the labor market is continued attendance in school. In the abstract, this alternative seems entirely beneficial and good. There is no such thing in a democracy as too much education for youth who will one day bear the responsibility of voting. The more enlightened the electorate, the better will be the democratic government. As a practical matter, however, the alternative of continuing in school may be a great handicap to both the young people and their families. Even though the public schools are free, each additional year of schooling means an added expense to a family. School students, like unemployed youth, are also dependents. This fact was unappreciated for some years, but when high school enrollments soared from less than 500,000 in 1900 to more

than 6,000,000 in 1939 the burden caused by the longer period of dependence was more apparent.

In 1937 the number of high-school graduates passed the million mark for the first time, thus nearly doubling the 1929 figure. There are consequently almost twice the number of high-school graduates looking for jobs today — when there aren't as many jobs available — as there were ten years ago. Obviously, many graduates must re-orient their ambitions in line with such realities as these. Vocational guidance services, which will provide school youth with the latest information on economic developments and the type of aptitude and training needed in various occupations, are vitally needed. Otherwise, we will have a generation of vocational misfits — unhappy, and at the same time a drag upon industry.

But not only has the competition for white-collar jobs among high-school graduates increased as a result of the tremendous rise in numbers during the last ten years. There has also been a very sizable stiffening in the competition for jobs between youths and adults as a result of the proportionate increase in the number of employable adults in the population. This obstacle to youth's entrance to the labor market is entirely apart from the other economic and social factors just outlined. Youth's chances of getting a job have been cut considerably by the change in population structure alone.

This change has been gradual, but it is very significant nonetheless. In 1870 about half of our whole population was over nineteen years of age; by 1900 nearly 57 per cent of the population was over nineteen years; and in 1940 we have approximately 65 per cent of the population in this upper age bracket. What this means is that there

are about 30 per cent more adults working or seeking work than there were seventy years ago. The time is passing when a comparatively large number of persons will hold responsible posts while in their twenties. Population studies indicate that in 1980 about three-quarters of our population will be more than nineteen years of age; and the number of those over sixty-five will be more than doubled. By that time, however, young workers will probably be at a premium rather than at a discount as at present.

In the meanwhile, youth poses a more immediate problem than old age, despite the hullabaloo about pensions and "Ham and Eggs." In fact, there is a real danger that youth's needs may be unfairly neglected by the present shift in the spotlight of public attention. In two months of 1939 over 1100 old-age benefit plans were introduced into our various state legislatures, but not more than half a dozen bills related to youth. And yet, from the standpoint of dependency alone, there are still only about four or five million old people over sixty-four in this category as compared with at least twelve million young people. Nor has the number of people over sixty-four increased by such a large amount in the last ten years that it has overshadowed the increase in the number of young dependents. True, there are over one and one-half million more old people today than in 1930; but at the same time there are today treble that number of young people to be added to the 1930 figures as dependents.

So much for the effects on youth of increased school enrollments and a changing population. Let us now turn to the youths who either must leave school before graduation or have no aspirations for a white-collar job. The

ambitions of these young people are set on a more modest plane. They don't expect to become office workers or bank clerks or sales persons. To get jobs as mechanics or factory workers is their goal. And yet their opportunities are as limited, possibly even more limited, than those seeking white-collar jobs. Many skilled occupations are already filled with experienced adult workers. Other occupations cannot provide openings for the thousands of youths desiring to enter them. Youth's great lack of work experience and training is also a major handicap to those seeking jobs; but even with this handicap removed, there is still the fact that there aren't nearly enough jobs for all who want them.

There is a further difficulty which youth must face before entering permanent private employment. The economic system, besides operating considerably below capacity, has become so enormously complex that there are as many as 18,000 different jobs from which a young person might make a choice. To choose the right occupation intelligently and carefully — though highly important — is now exceedingly difficult; and there are few places where young people can obtain adequate help.

The value to youth of a school, college, or vocational education is still a subject of unending debate. In times of job scarcity the practical value of an education seems to become emphasized. Education, it is maintained, must fit young people for a job; it must give them the training which can't be obtained in industry, so as to enable them to compete more successfully with experienced adults in the search for work; and it must give young people vocational information that will help them choose the most suitable fields. On the other hand, there is a sizable and

vocal school of thought which believes that culture and the search for truth are the basic aims of education, and that the utilitarian demand for specialized training is simply degrading the promotion of learning "to a vehicle for providing material well-being." There are others who regard the present educational system as inadequate, unrealistic, and a waste of money. And there are still others who see in education the solution of all the problems of the world.

Though people differ as to wherein the exact value of education lies, they are all agreed that the right kind of education does have value. Popular support for greater educational facilities was, for this reason, fairly easy to obtain until recent years. And yet the underlying, but unspoken, reason why education received such popular support was that it was keeping youth occupied in what was assumed to be a profitable manner. In the first thirty years of this century we rapidly built up a tremendous number of institutions known as schools — the total public school plant stands us about seven billion dollars today — and we herded millions of our youth into these institutions. Out of sight, out of mind. Behind the brick walls of the schools, we blindly believed that a great ideal — education — was being automatically realized. Except in the case of private schools, few people raised questions as to what kind of education their children were getting. It was enough that they were in school rather than constantly under foot at home. If Johnny showed lack of interest at about the age of fourteen, there was the truant officer — and, later, the child-labor or school-leaving age laws. The fact that these laws meant hardships for many needy families who counted on their children working in

order to eke out the family budget was soon overlooked or forgotten; nevertheless that all-important question of finances was present among the millions of families with an annual income of less than \$1000.

Then came the depression, and so great became the number of youth who were out of school and unemployed that we finally couldn't comfort ourselves any longer by saying "Let's send them all back to school and keep them there until more jobs turn up." The "Back-to-School" drives of 1931 and 1932 had only a temporary effect. For there were young persons who *wouldn't* go simply because they weren't interested. And there were even more who *couldn't* go, because they didn't have the money to pay for even such small items as school supplies, noon lunches, and carfares.

It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if public opinion had not been willing to expand the country's educational facilities so tremendously after 1900. What would have become of the youths who were shut off from the labor market by child-labor laws and the pressure of labor-displacing forces? In the first place, there would have been much more overcrowding in the schools than there was. In the second place, large-scale unemployment of youth would have emerged long before it actually did.

As a matter of fact, this is no idle speculation. What might have happened twenty or thirty years ago has been taking place in the last ten years. The point was reached where the displacement of youth from the labor market far exceeded the capacity of the educational system to absorb it. The principal result was widespread unemployment of youth. But the reasons for this did not



lie simply in the severe curtailment of educational facilities necessitated by reduced governmental budgets. People began to question whether education itself held any inherent value for youth after a certain age, and whether, after all, it was worth even the appropriations which had normally been voted for it. These doubts did almost as much as the necessity of economy to put an abrupt end to the expanding educational facilities of the country.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was widely hailed as a splendid solution for the youths who couldn't get private jobs and either couldn't afford, or had nothing to gain from, further education. The young men gained in three ways: they gained in health, they gained in good work habits and morale, and they received a much-needed income. At the same time, the program fitted in with the growing popularity of public works for the unemployed. But then it became evident that there were hundreds of thousands of other young persons, outside the scope of the CCC, who also needed assistance. There were the college students, for example; college enrollments dipped 10 per cent from 1932-34, after years of increase. College plant and equipment were going unused. Certainly it was unfair to help the out-of-school youth and not do something for those in school. The FERA College Aid Program, begun in February 1934, was the result; and so popular was it that it was continued until the National Youth Administration took it over in June 1935, and expanded it to include graduate students and secondary-school students.

Despite these programs, the Office of Education in 1935 placed the number of unemployed youth at five million. The CCC and the FERA College Aid Program had ap-

parently been making comparatively little headway in reducing such unemployment. In particular, little was being done to assist young women. A broader youth program was needed — a program that would not only help graduate and secondary-school students but also out-of-school young men and women who needed many types of work experience and training. The National Youth Administration's Work Program was the answer.

In June 1939 the NYA and CCC had been operating for four and six years respectively. During that time they aided nearly five million different young persons, about equally divided between the two agencies. For the last four years the two agencies together employed on the average roughly six or seven hundred thousand young persons a month. That is a tremendous number. Conceive of them as gathered in one spot and they would form a city approximately the size of San Francisco. And yet, even with the Federal Government providing this impressive assistance, there are more than five times this number — four million young people — who are totally unemployed.

What further should be done to solve youth's difficulties, is not within the province of this chapter to discuss. That question is discussed elsewhere. All I wish to do here is to make strikingly evident that youth's problems are still far from either a temporary or permanent solution, and that the crux of the matter is one of providing young people with incomes and of keeping them profitably occupied.

It is tragically ironic that mankind, after struggling for centuries to lighten the drudgery of work, should be faced with a "leisure time" problem. For centuries people

worked from dawn until dusk, just keeping body and soul alive, but dreaming of the day when they wouldn't have to strain and struggle for such long hours. Today we have millions of youths and adults doing virtually nothing from dawn until dusk but hoping for a job — any job — that will keep them busy. And we have learned, to our dismay, how demoralizing idleness can be, how quickly skills can be lost without practice, how people can be thrown out of jobs even when they are skilled and capable and industrious.

Idleness would not be nearly so demoralizing, of course, if every one could do as he pleased during his idle hours. But unemployment for most of our workers doesn't mean that for a month or two they can go and bask on the sands of either Miami Beach or Cape Cod. It doesn't mean leisure time in which to go to the movies, theatre, opera, or symphony concert. Unemployment means delving into the small nest-egg of savings or going on relief, in order to buy food and to keep a roof over the family's head. It means constant worry as to what to do and where to go. It means haunting employment offices, answering want ads, and lounging idly in a crowded home or at the street corner. And, for youth, idleness carries a particularly poignant despair in the sudden crushing of high hopes and in the inexorable consignment to a fate of doing nothing. The years of youth are our best years; and to have one or two or three of these wasted in idleness is truly tragic.

In the final analysis, therefore, there are two fundamental questions to be answered in solving youth's problems. First, how can youth be kept occupied most profitably? And, second, how can youth best be pro-

vided with an income? You may say that in assisting adults the same two questions arise — which is perfectly true, on the whole. At the same time, the thesis of this chapter is that the youth group, to a far greater degree than any other age group, has been forced to accept the two decided evils produced by the economic and social developments in this country up to this time — idleness and deprivation of income. Youth can no longer be shoved out of sight and thus out of mind by being sent back into the school system, whether to get further general education, vocational education, or vocational guidance. Nor can youth be casually dismissed in its role as potential producer or consumer. The answer to the first question may be private jobs, or jobs with training value, or vocational guidance, or further education, or some new type of program which contains one, two, or all of these elements. The answer to the second question may be loans, or scholarships, or part-time government and private jobs, or some type of full-time job. It won't do to find an answer to just one of these questions; answers to both questions must be found.

And beyond these two basic problems of youth, there are the many other problems revolving around the uncertainties of our times. The fact that youth is confused and apathetic is not alone due to lack of job opportunities or a poor educational curriculum. The "acids of modernity" have also had their effect in eating at the bases of traditional faiths and beliefs. And the complexity of the modern world has only added to the confusion of youth and maturity alike. If youth could be given a faith in our democracy — a faith so deep and so strong that it would clarify our present situation — then all the

skepticism and muddle which so many people face would vanish overnight. Youth would have a cause for which to battle; a fixed star by which to set its course. American youth may have good training and adequate income; but if it does not have an abiding faith, then all is indeed in vain.

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PART II

RESOURCES AND OBJECTIVES

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## IV

### THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOLS

*Aubrey Williams*

IT IS all very well to make sweeping generalizations about youth; it is all very well to treat youth as a magnificent abstraction; but for the millions who belong to America's younger generation there are five major problems which demand an immediate and practical solution: (1) how to stay longer in school and college; (2) how to choose a suitable and promising occupation; (3) how to get work experience and training for such an occupation; (4) how to obtain the right job, or any job, in private employment; and, finally (5), how to spend leisure time in as constructive and profitable a manner as possible.

Many people with whom I have talked believe that the schools can solve these problems of youth. They point to the four million unemployed youth and declare that the schools are to blame because their students are not able to get work after graduation. In fact, not so long ago Mr. Roger Babson told the New England Association of School Superintendents that the schools were "primarily responsible for at least 7,000,000 of the 10,000,000 unemployed in the United States. . . . This nation will be saved only as these 10,000,000 unemployed get back to work. This, moreover, will come only as our schools (the home should do it, but that day — like home



bread-making — is gone) arouse within the souls of the students the desire to struggle and the willingness to sacrifice." And yet the schools obviously can't be expected to make over the industrial structure so as to provide employment for young people. Nor can the schools be expected to provide needy youths with an income to enable them to continue their education.

To Mr. Babson's contention that the schools are to blame for unemployment by failing to arouse in youth "the desire to struggle and the willingness to sacrifice," it should be pointed out that most of the people who are unemployed today have found themselves in that unfortunate position, not because they are lazy and unwilling to make sacrifices, but because a vast economic machine (entirely beyond a single individual's power to control) is not operating at full capacity. When our unemployed have found jobs and have had the opportunity to prove themselves, they have worked every bit as energetically as those who have never lost their jobs. Furthermore, it is precisely our unemployed youth and adults who are being forced to make the greatest sacrifices while our economic system is revamped and put into sound working order.

However, when most people put forward the school as the answer to how we may get to the root of youth's problems, they are usually thinking in terms of vocational education and vocational guidance. They make two major assumptions based on a theoretical rather than a practical view. In the first place, they assume that any youth who has received a thorough education and training in one vocation can certainly obtain a job. Secondly, they assume that if a young man knows exactly for

what type of job he is fitted by reason of interest and aptitude, then at least half the battle is won — the only thing remaining for the youth to do is to get the required training and the job is to be had for the asking.

Let us analyze these assumptions. It is undoubtedly true that many young people can be greatly benefited through a more extensive preparation for jobs. For example, a study of the young people coming on to NYA projects showed that more than half had never held any kind of job, while another 40 per cent had only the slight experience offered by jobs requiring little or no skill.

It is also true that if our national income should be boosted to ninety or one hundred billion dollars within the next few years, the demand for skilled workers would be tremendous. Such an income, it is estimated by the National Resources Committee, would give employment to almost every employable person in the country — provided there were a sufficient number of skilled workers. Actually, if present trends were to continue, we wouldn't have the requisite trained personnel, and industry couldn't gear itself to such an income.

At the same time, though we may estimate approximately how many more workers will be needed in each industry if our industrial machine operates at capacity, many difficulties lie in the way of planning to meet our future needs for trained personnel. Chief among these difficulties is that one cannot predict with any certainty that in 1940 we will require so many new metal-trades workers and in 1941 just so many more.

Specialized vocational training has several other important limitations. First of all, jobs requiring rather

elaborate skills are not now to be had for the asking. Too often, before such jobs become available — involving possibly, a wait of a year or two — the young person who has specialized in the field has become rusty or has forgotten a significant amount of what had been painstakingly learned. In specializing, a young man or woman is taking a gamble by banking too heavily on the potentialities of one occupation.

Second, the modern factory, in becoming specialized to an extreme, has created an increasing demand for semi-skilled rather than skilled workers. Such semi-skilled workers can obtain the required manipulative ability in a training period of from two or three weeks to eight or nine months. This fact was made particularly evident by a study, conducted in 1934, of eighty-five manufacturing plants in Minnesota. An analysis of the jobs in these plants, which represented thirty-three different industries, revealed that about 72 per cent of the operations performed in the various industries demanded a training period that was less than nine months. In fact, 22 per cent of the operations demanded less than two weeks' training for the performance of adequate work, while 33 per cent of the jobs required anywhere from two weeks to two months of training. The schools can thus provide the majority of our young people with all the vocational training they will ever need in less than a year. Yet youths are staying in school for four or five years longer today than they did twenty-five years ago. The schools must — if possible — keep youth profitably occupied in many other ways besides vocational training before they can be said to hold a solution for youth's problems.

From its very inception the NYA program has stayed clear of providing youth with vocational training, partly in recognition of the legitimate interests of both the labor unions and the already-existing vocational education facilities in this field. But, as time has gone on and we have experimented with varying ways in which we could best aid unemployed and out-of-school youth, it has become clear that the best bet for the majority of job-seeking young people is to try to get a well-rounded and generalized work experience, applicable to a family of occupations.

There are certain abilities which all workers of a general type need, involving the use of both head and hand as well as the knack of working with and under other people. A clumsy and careless youth can be taught to be dexterous and careful under proper supervision. A lazy or lackadaisical youth can often be made industrious and creative, if the right approach to his interests and aptitudes is found. A trouble-making or uncoöperative youth can be made unusually willing through training and getting at the root of his troubles. The National Youth Administration has therefore concentrated on giving young people a try-out experience on several types of jobs, thus giving them a chance to find out for themselves what their interests and abilities are, and at the same time laying a solid groundwork of basic skills and good working habits. A five or six weeks' experience of working on the repair of autos and trucks or the wiring of a small school building or the construction of a community center gives the young people ample time to find out what the job is all about, whether or not they like the work, and whether or not they are suited to it.

Such a knowledge of occupations is naturally very important to young people if they are not to find themselves in jobs for which they aren't suited and in which they have little or no interest. At the same time they must be given fairly accurate information about the opportunities that exist in any occupation which they are interested in entering. Many people, as I have already pointed out, believe that the schools can contribute greatly to the solution of youth's problems if sound vocational guidance is made a standard part of the curriculum. There is much evidence to support their position.

Each year finds innumerable cases of young people training for fields that are overcrowded or for fields in which they don't have the necessary capacity. The fate of thousands of youth who have studied to be doctors or lawyers or architects, for example, is too well known to allow of contradiction. We all know of cases similar to that of the young man who graduated with honors from one of the country's leading architectural schools and ended up selling dolls in Macy's. Then, again, there are thousands graduating from high schools all over the country who are trained and ready to enter non-existent white-collar jobs. A survey of youth graduating from the Cleveland High Schools a few years ago found that 90 per cent expected to enter white-collar jobs, while only 10 per cent of the city's working population was engaged in this type of work. And, finally, there are the thousands who want to get training in a popular occupation such as aviation mechanics, Diesel engineering, or air conditioning. If vocational training in these fields were provided to all those who wanted it, there would be several hundred thousand ready to enter these occupations

each year, though only a small percentage could be admitted. Many are fascinated by the aura of golden opportunity which has been allowed to gather around these occupations; and, whether properly qualified or not, they are trying desperately to gain a foothold in them.

The young people who are interested in aviation mechanics, Diesel engineering, air conditioning, and similar "fascinating" types of work need to be disabused of any false notions as to the prospects of these occupations and the types of required training and ability. The high-school graduates who expect white-collar jobs should be taught three important things: first, the potentialities of such work; second, that the value of their education must be reckoned in terms of fitness for life and for citizenship and not simply in terms of a larger future income; and third, that there is nothing dishonorable or disgraceful about working for a living on a job that requires getting one's hands dirty.

At the present time, despite the great need for it, comparatively few young persons receive adequate vocational guidance. Only a small percentage of the more progressive schools are now providing such services; and, what is more, nine-tenths of the academic high schools in so advanced a state as New York assume no active concern for their students' vocational adjustments once they have left the school.

But even if the schools were to find the means and the personnel to provide adequate vocational-guidance services to all young people, "the facts of arithmetic cannot be wished away." There would still be too many young people for the number of available jobs. Born mechanics would still have to be content with a gasoline-attendant

job for several years or more. Young people qualified for white-collar work would still find themselves unemployed. Vocational guidance does not, therefore, offer a fundamental solution to youth's problems.

The truth of the matter is that such a report as that prepared by the New York Regents' Inquiry ("High School and Life") has indicated probably the full extent to which the schools can go in solving youth's problems. The Inquiry believes it possible for the schools to do the adequate and proper vocational-education job that has been suggested as being needed. The Inquiry also believes it possible for the schools to provide youth with adequate vocational-guidance services. It recommends further that the compulsory attendance laws be framed in terms not only of age but also of some form of direct evidence as to the students' readiness to leave school, such as ability to get and to hold a job. Admittedly, this New Educational Program will cost money; but by various economies in the present New York educational system — including chiefly the elimination of unusually small classes and the reduction of costs in line with decreasing elementary school enrollments — the necessary funds can be made available, it is estimated, without requiring any additional appropriations.

However, three major questions concerning this program promptly arise. First, to what extent would it solve youth's problems in New York State? Second, to what extent, if at all, could it be applied in the other states of the Union? And, third, if the schools cannot handle youth's problems adequately, what should be done?

Let it be made clear at the outset that the Regents' Inquiry makes no claim that its program is the answer to

all the problems of youth in New York State but is rather "a comprehensive program for redirecting the educational policy of the State to meet the changes taking place in the needs of youth." It provides, according to its authors, a revision of the educational system, so that it will in the future more nearly (1) accommodate all the children of all the people, (2) handle all types of youth with their various capacities and needs, (3) give a general education at the secondary school level, (4) meet the new vocational requirements of a new world and the increasing difficulties of self-government, and (5) enable the schools and their students to keep up with the spectacular advance of knowledge, with the new ways of life, and with the educational problems which they raise.

But let us now look at this program from the following viewpoint. The problems of millions of youth may be boiled down to but one problem: the gap which exists between the day young people leave school and the day they get a more or less permanent job in private employment. There are several ways in which this gap might be closed. The school, on the one hand, could extend its responsibilities upward so as to include all young people until they obtain the required job. Industry, on the other hand, could extend its realm downward once more and create enough job opportunities so as to enable all young people to obtain jobs upon leaving school. Or both processes could take place at the same time, with neither education nor industry assuming the full burden.

Those who believe the schools can solve youth's problems are thinking solely in terms of the first of these ways with which to close the gap. In so doing, they tend to overlook the fact that a job may be the one thing many



young people need because in that way only can they build up sound knowledge, skills, and habits. By keeping young people in school until they are nineteen or twenty, you are not only prolonging their adolescence; you are also keeping them from real work for which there is no good substitute. Constructing a brick wall and then tearing it down is good practice, but it is completely lacking in satisfaction. Over the long run of several years, young people want to feel that they are doing something useful and making a real contribution to society.

The believers in the school system as a final solution tend also to overlook the fact that youth as a whole needs an income as well as its accompanying purchasing power. And in permanently depriving four or five million more young people of the opportunity to earn money, you would be curtailing the nation's purchasing power. If youth did not have the income to purchase food, clothes, amusements, and so on, then the hundreds of thousands of adults — and young people — who produce these goods and services would be thrown out of work.

The Regents' Inquiry's New Educational Program, insofar as it might be held to be a total solution by keeping youth in a realistically revised educational system until a job is obtained, is open to both these criticisms. Thousands of needy families are already undergoing hardships because their children must stay in school until they are sixteen. A family with an income of less than \$600 a year — which is the average family income of NYA school students — simply can't afford to shoulder the expense of sending their children to public school year after year. That is why four out of every ten young persons actually do leave school before graduating. That

is why only 44 per cent of the children of unskilled workers finish high school, as compared with 90 per cent of the children of professional persons. Financial rather than scholastic factors thus force most of the young people who leave school to cut short their educational careers. If they were all now to be required to stay in school until they were eighteen, nineteen, or twenty, the burden on their families would be just that much greater.

To meet this difficulty the schools would have to find ways to give youth the needed income. Scholarships have been heretofore the usual means of enabling needy youths to continue in school or college. But to do an adequate job through scholarships would require far larger sums of money than is contemplated, at least by the Regents' Inquiry. In November 1937, the Biggers Census found that in New York State there were 237,150 young people who were totally unemployed, and another 38,763 who were emergency workers. These figures did not include the 27,000 students who were being aided under the NYA Student Aid Program. And yet the National Youth Administration paid out in wages to these students and to the 15,000 out-of-school project workers, included among the emergency workers, in the year 1937-38, over six million dollars. To keep all the young people who were unemployed or emergency workers in the school system would probably cost the state at least six times this amount annually.

There is no reason to suppose that the state's educational system could assume this additional burden. Nor, to my mind, is there any reason why it should do so.

Furthermore, when we come to weigh a similar proposition for other states, the situation becomes even more

hopeless. As it is, New York spends about \$176 a year per child in average daily attendance in public elementary and secondary schools. A state such as South Carolina, however, can afford to spend only \$33 a year on each of its pupils; and it has a long distance to go before it can provide an educational system equivalent in adequacy and quality to New York State's present system. So it is with most of the other states. The schools simply cannot solve youth's problems for this one reason alone — that the financial burden of such a procedure would be far too great.

I have already suggested that, even though this financial obstacle could be overcome — possibly, as has been suggested, through assistance from the Federal Government which would help equalize educational opportunities among the states — it would still be unfair and possibly undesirable for the schools to assume the responsibility for all of youth's problems. It would be unfair, because industry and government and labor have a large stake in the matter. Industry must not ignore the group which one day will hold responsible positions and whose thorough training for such jobs should have been begun some time ago. Each year of idleness in youth is a terrific handicap that will be difficult to overcome. To industry, youth is just so much surplus labor which has the advantage of being cheap but has the disadvantage of no experience and training. Industry might feel more responsibility for young people if they had held jobs for any length of time; but, never having been employed by industry long enough to have become a part of it, youth is shortsightedly ignored. Yet industry could solve some of youth's problems more readily than the schools if it

created enough jobs to provide youth with work experience and a much-needed income. Not that industry in and of itself is wholly or even mainly to blame for the fact that our economic machine is not operating at its full capacity; but by concentrating on the realization of this end, we can come more nearly towards solving youth's problems than if we concentrate solely on the expansion and revision of our educational system.

Heretofore industrialists, business men, and inventors have directed most of their attention to the problem of creating and developing labor-saving devices, which, in addition to providing the boon of leisure, have also presented millions of Americans with the demoralizing and wasteful horrors of idleness and unemployment. If these same people would now spend just as much time and money and intelligence and energy on the problem of creating new industries as well as new methods of production and distribution, so that millions of persons could be put back to work, then we would make a lot more headway in the solution of both the youth and unemployment problems. Industry has the capacity to produce enough to fill the basic needs of every person in this country; and if we can find some way of utilizing its productive capacity to the full, then we will open up jobs for youth as well as for all our unemployed.

Labor also has a part to play in creating more vocational-training, apprenticeship, and job opportunities for youth. Our young people cannot go far along the road of becoming skilled workers without the coöperation of the various labor unions; and yet the country would doubtless face a skilled labor shortage, as was pointed out previously, if our national income should mount to

the ninety billion dollar mark. A more clear-cut, long-range policy on the part of the labor unions towards vocational and apprentice training needs to be mapped out — a policy which would take into account the future and potential needs of our economic system as well as the present desperate needs of youth.

What government can do, apart from its educational system, is a many-sided proposition. It can guard its citizens against exploitation and oppression through laws related to monopolies, labor relations, wages and hours, and child labor. It can help reduce the injustices of our economic system through such devices as the income tax, social-security legislation, and a works program for the unemployed. And it can provide youth with greater opportunities through the maintenance of work projects for needy students, the advancement of vocational education, the promotion of fair apprentice-training standards, the encouragement and establishment of job guidance and placement services, the maintenance of camps or work projects for unemployed and out-of-school youth, and the expansion of public recreational facilities.

But most important of all, in view of the immediate needs of youth which cannot wait upon an ideal solution, is the fact that the government is in a position to help those young people who are outside the school system and not yet absorbed by the economic system. The young men and women who leave or graduate from school at sixteen years of age on through twenty-four must be assisted somehow if they are unable to find some form of useful employment for themselves. Even the Regents' Inquiry does not contemplate aiding young people who

are nineteen or twenty or over unless they are in college — at least not immediately. And it should be clear by this time that the schools in states other than New York cannot possibly assist their students in the comprehensive manner outlined by the Regents' Inquiry. Even assuming that our schools could profitably hold all youth within their confines until the age of eighteen, there would still be the millions of youth from eighteen to twenty-four who would need assistance.

Nor can such governmental agencies as the NYA and CCC solve youth's problems. Though their programs are in many respects satisfactory, they are nonetheless limited in scope by the funds that have been appropriated to them. The NYA is employing nearly 500,000 students at a wage that pays for school or college supplies, noon lunches, bus fares, board and room, or tuition — thus enabling them to remain out of the labor market and to continue their education. The NYA and CCC together are employing another 600,000 at useful work that is providing them with a much-needed income, however small. But, important as all this assistance is, there must be no overlooking the fact that there are at least 4,000,000 other young people who are out of school, unemployed, and seeking work. Which brings us face to face with the inevitable conclusion that youth's problems are too intimately bound up with society's basic economic and social problems to allow of solution by any single group such as the Federal Government or industry or labor or youth itself — or the schools. A concerted attack by all these groups is necessary.

Nor is there time for further procrastination and delay. The economic system is still operating at about 30 per

cent below its potential capacity. Each month sees an incredible waste of the resources available in millions of youth. And yet the future foundations of American democracy will rest on the youth of today. We allow these foundations to be steadily weakened at the peril of those hopes and ideals which we cherish most.

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## V

### THE PRIVATE AGENCY

*Mary H. S. Hayes*

THE first private efforts for social betterment go back to that Good Samaritan who had compassion on a certain man who was set upon by thieves and stripped of his goods and left half dead on the road to Jericho, and they were as personal and individualistic as that first piece of social case work. The Good Samaritan, you remember, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him upon his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and gave to the host two pieces of silver saying, "Care for him."

As the complexities of modern society multiplied, many men came to be set upon by thieves — too many to be cared for by the lone-wolf sort of Good Samaritan, and gradually Good Samaritans got together and formed agencies of Good Samaritans. In time these agencies began to specialize, some devoting themselves to binding up the wounds, and others to giving silver for care at the inn; and organized social agencies came into being, specializing in medical care, family case work, aid to dependents and delinquents, character-building agencies, and numerous others. Socially-minded individuals and philanthropic foundations provided — and generously provided — the necessary funds.

In spite of this private support, organized latterly into



"chests" and "drives" with a high degree of efficiency, it soon was found that with every recurrence of a major catastrophe — fires, earthquakes, and floods — private support was inadequate and public agencies must be drawn into the picture.

Far more significant than the recognition of the need for help in these sporadic disasters was the realization that nation-wide evils and injustices were spread in magnitude far beyond the possibility of help from private contributions. The unparalleled unemployment condition of the past ten years was the final and convincing proof that large public agencies and legal measures alone could meet these situations and prevent or mitigate their recurrence.

What of the private agencies during this past decade? Contributions were cut of necessity, since the contributors themselves shared in the widespread depression. Their staffs were raided of their trained workers to man the public agencies being greatly expanded or newly created. Where commitments had been made in buildings and other physical employment, services had to be curtailed to provide for mortgage payments. Salary cuts and overtime work were accepted as a necessity. But it was obvious to everyone that a national social disaster would have been inevitable if public agencies had not stepped in to meet the crisis, and continued in operation to serve a crisis which developed into a situation.

The public social agency has in the last decade gained a confidence never before approached. It is here to stay, both because it has shown that it can be administered efficiently and honestly and, even more, because the American public has been made aware of the size and

multiplicity of the social problems with which it is faced — problems aggregating to a magnitude far beyond the resources of any private agency or any combination of agencies.

This reinforcing of the activities of private social agencies by public institutions has ample precedent in the history of education. It was not so long ago that there were some 6000 private secondary schools in the United States, while the United States Office of Education reports that for 1936 there were only 3327, with a total enrollment of 387,309 students. The public secondary schools, on the other hand, rose from a total of 2600 in 1895, with an enrollment of 210,000, to over 29,000 publicly supported secondary schools in 1935-36, with an enrollment of 5,974,537. In a recent number of one of the magazines, President Hutchins of Chicago makes the same comparison between the privately endowed colleges and universities and those institutions of higher learning supported by public funds. Dr. Hutchins, after admitting that the state and municipal universities can meet fully the standards of teaching and research obtained by the private institutions, makes a plea for the continuance of the privately endowed universities because of the work they have done both in setting standards, and, by their continuance, in holding public institutions to those standards. It is his contention that it is the leadership which the privately endowed institution provides that conditions the excellence of public institutions. Dr. Hutchins says further:

I can think of no important ideas or movements in American higher education in the last seventy-five years that did not originate in the endowed universities. Research began at

Harvard and gained impetus through the establishment of Johns Hopkins, Clark, and Chicago. Graduate study started at Yale. The great increase in professors' salaries came after the University of Chicago doubled the maximum in the 90's. All, or almost all, the state universities reduced salaries in the vicinity of 1932. They would have cut them faster and further if Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Chicago had cut them. The tradition of academic freedom was established at Harvard. Harvard and Chicago led the fight for it during the latest era of red-baiting.

Similar developments in the transition from the private to the public authority can be seen in the health field, in the field of protective care for children, of provision for recreation, and of the various forms of security insurance — workmen's compensation, old-age security, and unemployment insurance. The growth of the publicly supported employment agencies following the passage of the Wagner-Peyser act of 1933 has continued until, from a total of 151 offices in 1930, there are now approximately 1650 offices in all the states and the District of Columbia. The development of the present high standards of personnel and procedures in public employment services has been reflected both in the type of applicants now coming and the kinds of orders which employers are now placing with these offices. Those that knew the public employment service when the only time an employer called was when he needed a gang of men to unload a coal-car, and the only applicants that came to it were the common labor group who primarily wanted a place to get in out of the cold, find it difficult to believe that in at least one state the State Employment Service has a division for teacher placement which is called upon by practically all the schools of the state. In this change

is reflected the efforts of private agencies, YMCA's, YWCA's, and various other social agencies which set standards for employment services on the basis of which the Wagner-Peyser act was passed and the subsequent improvement of the public employment agencies came about.

Now at long last public agencies are coming into the picture to provide work on public projects. Born in the years of the depression were several such agencies as the WPA, the PWA, the CCC, and the NYA. Even here the idea of substituting work for a dole in times of unemployment was foreshadowed by the woodyards of the Salvation Army and other social agencies, and was even more exactly reproduced in the work program of the Emergency Work Committees established in New York and other large cities in 1931-32. While such work programs have been commonly regarded as an emergency measure which would expire with a renewed business activity, it is beginning to be realized by many that for the younger group, at least, some such program of public work must be permanently established as a transition from school to work. Even with the return of full prosperity it is evident that technological improvements have so far decreased the man-power necessary to maintain full production that there is no possibility of taking up the slack of the unemployed. There is every indication, and perhaps a social justification, for selecting for a limited labor market those people in the middle age range, and for lopping off the older and the younger groups. For the older group public agencies have been providing old-age benefits and other inducements to an early retirement, and for the younger group increased school-

leaving laws are taking care of the matter of child labor. There is, however, a group in between for which further schooling is not the answer. These young people have reached the saturation point, so to speak, of what they are willing or able to absorb in further training, and are anxious to stop "taking in" and to begin to "give out." If, then, as the signs indicate, a restricted labor market is going to prevent their absorption into private industry, it would seem that some such public work agency as is now provided by the National Youth Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps must become a public responsibility.

What, then, is the future service that can and should be rendered by the private agencies?

The private agency of the present, and of the future, has two great functions—research and demonstration of values—and a flexibility that permits exceptions to established rules based on averages. As an illustration of these functions I would cite the history and intent of a private agency in New York City, the Vocational Service for Juniors.

The Vocational Service for Juniors has for fifteen years held to these two functions. It came into being when it opened its first free employment bureaus for young people nearly fifty years ago. It did so to meet the challenge of boys and girls being victimized by unscrupulous employers who exploited their youth and inexperience by long hours, low pay, poor working conditions, and a disregard of the regulations in regard to working age and school attendance.

When later it came to realize that too many of its young clients, for lack of adequate counsel, had failed to

take advantage of the opportunities offered by the school system, this organization took on another function — that of establishing counselors at that place in the school system where selection of training first occurs. Still later, with the realization that in spite of the American system of free popular education there were young people for whom such a small item as ten cents a day for carfare imposed a barrier that made further attendance at high school impossible, the Vocational Service for Juniors developed its scholarship department and raised a budget for providing weekly grants to these young people.

With the increased interest in the field of guidance and placement there came a need for adequately trained personnel, and for three years this organization concentrated on a diversified "in-service" training of counselors, which, I believe, is still the last word in adequate preparation for this work.

Came the depression of '29, and the Vocational Service found the group most in need of its assistance had changed. They were older. For better or worse, the NRA codes had forced the under-sixteens back into full-time school. The new group were past the school-leaving age. They had severed their connection with the adult institutions of education and were unable to establish a connection with that other adult institution, industry. And the Vocational Service developed its "consultation service" in coöperation with the New York State Employment Service and the NYA to help them through this stretch.

Consistently, and persistently, the Vocational Service has held to the thesis that the function of the private

agency is to experiment and to demonstrate: to locate the need, and to seek to find methods of meeting it, and then to prove by demonstration the value of the service. But quite as truly it has held that these services should be extended far beyond the bounds that the limited finances of any private organization permit. And so, in 1925, it persuaded the educational authorities that vocational counselors should be an integral part of the public school system; and counselors are now employed in forty of the junior and senior high schools of New York City. In 1929 it convinced the Labor Department that the employment needs of young people would be served by the creation of a separate department of junior placement, and there are now junior divisions in the State Employment Offices of twenty-four cities of the state. Through the agency of the National Youth Administration, it is playing its part in proving, on a national scale, the value of a consultation service in helping to bridge the gap between school and work. Consultation services are now operating in twelve cities.

As one reads the signs, the star of the private agency, as a purely service agency, is on the wane. It must experiment, it must demonstrate, it must train, and it must work for the establishment of adequate tax-supported agencies, but it must resign to these agencies the task of carrying on the work that it had started.

This is oftentimes an agonizing process. The per capita cost must be lowered, and that means a less intensive service. The necessary expansion in staff means that less adequate personnel is available. Because the service must be given to *all*, without benefit of selection, the service of necessity becomes more impersonal, the program less

flexible. For those of us brought up in the traditions of the private agency there is a great desire to cry, "This is no child of mine. I will have none of it." We would pull down the lid of our right little, tight little organization and make unseemly faces through the windows at the efforts of the public agencies outside.

If one sets out to pick flaws in the private agency's philosophy and procedure, I believe the charge brought against it would be that it is provincial — that it manifests a tendency to stake out a field for itself — the poor families in the southwest part of town, or the orphans of Presbyterian parents — and to concentrate on doing the best possible job for them. This is quite as it should be in many ways. Certainly no good can come of spreading one's effort so thin that nothing is accomplished; but there is danger of a failure to recognize the evils and injustices going on in the next block — "You, when your front door is shut, you swear the whole world's warm."

In its wholly commendable concentration on the individual client and the effort to better his lot the private agency sometimes has a tendency to neglect the social conditions that brought about the sorry plight, not alone of that client but of society as a whole. It recognizes only an obligation to the individual and solves the problem by transferring him to another environment. It feels no obligation to try to modify or improve this environment or even to communicate to agencies responsible for such change the information which it has had a peculiarly favorable opportunity to discover. Poor teaching in a particular school, for example, low wages or other unfortunate conditions in a factory — the answer



has been to transfer the pupil to another school or get the worker another job and to forget those other pupils and those other workers not fortunate enough to have a friend at court.

The private agency is, therefore, because of its intensive study of individual cases, in a most favorable position to see where social wrongs exist and to suggest methods for their amelioration.

In the same way, also, it is to the private agency that the public agency should turn for help in providing a skeleton program that will be an abridgment of their more intensive program — an intensive program that the per capita cost makes impossible on a widespread basis. If only one interview instead of three can be had with a client, what are the most important bits of information that should be obtained? If only a limited food-budget can be provided, what are the most essential items that should be on that menu? If only a limited health examination can be given, what are the most significant danger spots that should be looked into? In other words, given a stated income, how can you best budget this to give, not a perfect service to a limited case-load, but to an unrestricted case-load the best service the available funds will permit? In other words, "Do the best you can for \$2.00."

Forewarned of what is to come, the great task before the private agency is, to my mind, to bend all its efforts and all the abilities and ingenuity at its command to adapt the method and techniques of a service it has built up on the basis of a limited load to a service necessarily abbreviated because applied to a far greater number. Social work of all kinds must find a way of doing *individual*

work on a *quantity production basis*. We must keep the quality of the work we do, without the conditions that seemingly brought that quality about. It seems a paradox. Maybe it can't be done, but I believe the private agencies must have a go at it.

## VI

### WORK CAMPS FOR YOUTH

*Kenneth Holland*

**D**URING the first century and a quarter of this nation, American youth was in more or less close contact with the rugged forces of nature. To choose two outstanding examples: Washington surveyed the wilderness, fought Indians, and farmed extensively; Lincoln was born in a log cabin, cleared and fenced land, and did other types of work on farms before he became a lawyer and statesman. One cannot help feeling that some of the finest qualities in individuals that are typically American somehow developed because of this contact with nature during the conquest of the vast area lying between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. Possibly like Antaeus, the son of Mother Nature in Greek mythology, who was strong only so long as his feet touched the soil, we are losing an important element in our heritage as American life becomes more and more urbanized and our youth no longer experience the rigors of hard manual labor in the out-of-doors.

At least one "father of our country," Thomas Jefferson, cautioned us about this situation when he wrote, "I think our governments will remain virtuous . . . as long as they are chiefly agricultural. . . . When they get piled up on one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt as in Europe."

How can our youth at the present time get the realistic experiences that will give them the courage, the willingness to do hard work, the depth of understanding, and the faith in the "American dream" that our forefathers had? Perhaps the work camp which has already provided American youth nearly three million strong with an opportunity to live and work as our pioneers did can provide this experience.

In preceding chapters of this volume the school and social agencies have been discussed, and the role that they are playing in assisting American youth to prepare for intelligent participation in adult life. The school and the social agency will doubtless continue to modify and expand their programs to meet the real needs of youth. However, neither one of these agencies has yet developed plans to give any large number of young people practical work experience. Schools have tended to isolate youth from the current of everyday problems and have emphasized academic achievement. Their programs have been poorly adapted to the majority of the pupils attending classes. Also, the schools do not seem to be in any position to provide work experience with pay, which is necessary if many of the young people from families in the lower economic strata are to take advantage of such training opportunities. Private and public social agencies, too, do not seem to be designed to provide youth with a comprehensive work-training program. It would seem that, more and more, private agencies will have to devote their energies to experimental work designed to devise new methods for the care and training of youth, and at the same time criticize and help improve the programs of the public social agencies.

In the meantime a new institution has developed, the work camp, which even before it was adopted here in the United States had become a permanent institution in other nations of the world. Uniquely designed to provide work and education, the CCC camps, the camps of the American Friends Service Committee and Work Camps for America, and the National Youth Administration Resident Centers are now developing and adapting themselves to the needs of American youth.

## II

European countries faced a problem of unemployed out-of-school youth before we did, and began developing a work-camp movement as early as 1921 that eventually included more than twenty-five countries. In some cases these work-camp services have become permanent agencies for the training of youth.

The work-camp idea, however, is not a purely foreign importation, since Americans discussed the idea as early as 1910, when William James of Harvard University wrote his essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War." He suggested "a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against Nature." As a result, he said, "injustice would tend to be evened out and numerous other goods to the commonwealth would follow. The military ideals of hardihood and discipline would be wrought into the growing fiber of the people; no one would remain blind as the luxurious classes now are blind, to man's relations to the globe he lives on. . . . Our gilded youths [would] be drafted off . . . to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with

healthier sympathies and soberer ideas. . . . They . . . would tread the earth more proudly . . . they would be better fathers and teachers of the following generation."

Shortly after William James proposed a "moral equivalent of war," a memorandum was prepared by Eugen Rosenstock and a group of other young graduates at Heidelberg University and sent to the German government, proposing an "army of public peace" which would bring together for constructive work the different classes of German youth.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin also proposed a type of labor service,<sup>2</sup> but none of these proposals immediately resulted in the development of labor camps as we know them. It took the World War and its aftermath of disillusioned and unemployed youth to bring about the establishment of work camps.

### III

The labor camp movement, at least during the first few years, tended to realize the ideal of Dr. James as expressed in his essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War." In 1920 a Swiss pacifist, Pierre Ceresole, backed by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Society of Friends, organized a group of young men, some of whom had fought on opposite sides during the war, to help in the rebuilding of the devastated areas of northern France. With the assistance of the Society of Friends, this International Voluntary Service for Peace, as it came to be

<sup>1</sup> W. Picht and E. Rosenstock, *Im Kampf um die Erwachsenen Bildung* (Leipzig: Quelle and Meyer, 1926), pp. 3-9. See also "A Peace Within," below.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (New York: Harper, 1850), pp. 42-43. *Munera Pulveris* (New York: Wiley, 1872), pp. 142-43.

called, spread to other countries and provided a way for conscientious objectors to demonstrate their willingness to perform constructive service in time of peace and undergo the rigors of battle, not with other human beings, but with the forces of nature. At the same time, these camps gave the volunteers an opportunity to study social and economic conditions in depressed areas. In order to participate the young men frequently paid for their board and room.

In Wales these volunteers worked with pick and shovel eight hours a day to convert areas of slag heaps and mine tips into recreation centers for the Welsh mining communities. In Switzerland they built roads, cleaned up after avalanches, and helped to reconstruct villages that had burned. In India new villages were constructed in a district ravaged by earthquake and floods.

#### IV

In Germany the effects of the post-war depression fell with particular severity on the youth group — disillusioned by defeat, suffering from undernourishment, unable to find means of earning a livelihood, and bitterly divided among themselves. There was special need for some integrating project which would give young Germans of different classes a common objective and unite them as citizens in Republican Germany. Work camps seemed to provide the experience which they needed. The healthful labor and wholesome food would build them up physically and the work projects would give them a common purpose for the summer and bring them into intimate coöperative relationship.

In 1925 the leader of the *Deutsche Freischar* organized

a camp at Colburn, Hanover, to unite young people in "common work and common play for the mutual understanding and enrichment of their life and outlook." Fifty students did field and forest work on the grounds of a castle, six hours of work in the morning being followed by an obligatory rest period of two hours. The remainder of the day was devoted to lectures, discussions, and singing. The outdoor labor and wholesome food made them physically strong. An educational and recreational program built up their morale. The informal interchange of ideas and the practical experience of working with their hands had a distinctly beneficial effect on students whose lives had been spent in the realms of the theoretical. This program was carried over to the camps for students, workers, and farmers which started in 1927. There were thirty of these camps before 1931. As Pierre Ceresole brought together in a "horizontal" way men of different nationalities, so these "vertical" camps helped break down class prejudice and professional isolation within one country. It is interesting to note that Dr. Rosenstock-Huessy, who has contributed to this volume, played an important part in the development of these camps. Working together and living under the same roof tended to make the young men realize that political and class distinctions were artificial.

The next development in the labor-camp movement began as the depression deepened and the numbers of unemployed young men and women increased. Before 1931 a relatively small number of young men participated in the labor camps. Then, as the crisis continued, private organizations, and later governments, came to look upon camps as a method of meeting, if not solving, the unem-



ployment problem among young people. Since Germany was already in a serious condition it is not surprising that, with the spread of the depression, it was one of the first of the European countries to begin subsidizing work camps to help solve the unemployment problem.

By the fall of 1932 the camps contained nearly 285,000 young Germans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. In return for their work they received from eight to ten cents a day and their work clothes, room, and board. The small sum of money they received was not thought of as a salary or compensation for the work done, but merely as "pocket money" to purchase candy, tobacco, or other incidentals. For some of the German youths, work in the *Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst* was simply a relief job; but the majority who volunteered were motivated by a spirit of devotion to duty and a desire to serve their country.

The youths in the camps spent their mornings on the work projects. They built roads, drained land on a small scale, regulated small streams, prepared land for agricultural settlement, did forestry work, and built gardens for the poor. The type of work done was restricted by law to projects which (1) promoted the general welfare, (2) did not compete with or take work from employed workers.

The afternoons and evenings were devoted to educational and recreational programs. These were adapted to the type of worker, but in every case an attempt was made to impress upon him his duties and responsibilities to the social order and to get him to understand his place in the life of the community.

Before the National Socialists came into power, the

camps were becoming an important phase of the educational life of Republican Germany. Peasants and workers were taught to understand their position with relation to society, while students gained respect for the discipline of physical labor and through this contact with the soil lost many of the qualities which Hitler has rightly ridiculed as "sterile intellectualism." By developing friendly relations with the surrounding communities and inviting them to participate in discussions, dramatic productions, and choruses, the camps were developing into a type of folk school.

The camps were so successful and popular that during the last few months of 1932 plans were being developed to encourage all students who contemplated higher education to spend several months in the camps as an orientation period. While these youths were in contact with the rugged forces of nature they were to be provided with counseling and guidance service to help them to decide what they were to do when they left camp. It was hoped especially that the number of youths desiring to attend the already overcrowded universities could be reduced.

## v

While the camps were developing under Republican Germany, the National Socialists were not friendly toward the camps under private or government auspices. They felt that the camps were used to propagandize the youth against National Socialism. Probably the fact that loyal and devoted Nazis went into the camps and lost some of their hatred for Communists, Jews, or liberals, and returned with a better understanding of the other classes and political groups also affected the attitude

of the National Socialists toward the camps. However, Hitler and his followers saw the possibilities in these camps as training and propaganda centers, and so developed camps of their own.

Shortly after Hitler was appointed Chancellor by President Hindenburg in January 1933, Konstantin Hierl was named as *Reichsarbeitsführer*, or National Leader of the Labor Service. Hierl's first step was to coördinate all the existing camps under Nazi leadership. Then, on January 7, 1934, the camps were placed under the Minister of the Interior.

In the spring of 1934 the National Union of German Students (*Deutsche Studentenschaft*) decided that labor service should be compulsory for every student before matriculating at a university. A compulsory term of labor service was also introduced in Württemberg for anyone who proposed to become a university teacher, while Saxony was the first state to insist that its public service personnel have experience in labor service. Employers were "urged" by the National Socialists, which in many cases meant ordered, to give employment preference to holders of the labor pass.

On July 1, 1935, the Labor Service became compulsory for all young Germans of both sexes as "an honor service for the German people." According to the law, the aims of the compulsory service were "to educate German youth in the spirit of National Socialism and . . . to awaken in it a feeling of national unity and a true conception of labor, above all a proper esteem for manual labor."<sup>3</sup>

The work projects carried on by the Labor Service

<sup>3</sup> Article I, Section 1, *RGBl*, June 27, 1935, p. 769.

were for the most part long-term programs of public works, and the avowed aim of this aspect of the program was the winning of "bread freedom" for Germany. The labor service's more important aim was expressed by National Labor Service Leader Hierl when he said, "In the entire scheme of the education of our people to a National Socialist outlook on life (*Weltanschauung*), a very special educational task falls to the Labor Service."<sup>4</sup>

Since the outbreak of the Second World War, the true aim of the labor service under Hitler has become more evident. The young men have been used to construct fortifications, dig trenches, make barbed-wire entanglements, build trails and roads in Germany, and re-establish means of communication in conquered Poland. The labor service, which even before the Second World War was called the Army's Prep School, now follows close on the heels of the invading troops to perform a myriad of services of supply and communication.

The labor service for women has also undergone considerable modification and expansion since the outbreak of hostilities. According to recent German official statements the number of women now enrolled in the labor service is about 100,000. Even more than before the Second World War the girls are being used to assist peasants in planting and harvesting their crops, in their housework, and in caring for the children. The women of the labor service are also used to prepare bandages and kits of toilet articles, tobacco, etc., for the soldiers at the front and the labor battalions working behind the lines.

<sup>4</sup> Müller-Brandenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

## VI

But labor camps need not necessarily be compulsory or part of the program of an authoritarian state to be successful. Indeed, the United States has more to learn from the labor services of Switzerland, Sweden, England, Holland, and Denmark than from the services of Germany or Bulgaria.<sup>5</sup>

In Switzerland the question of compulsory labor service was first raised in 1920 by a member of the federal legislature. But then, as in 1924, when the question was again considered by the legislature, the Swiss saw in it more disadvantages than advantages for their young citizens. Thus student camps organized by the National Union of Swiss students in 1925 constituted the first labor service in that country. However, when the unemployment problem became acute in 1933, it was to the work camps that the government turned as a means of caring for those affected by the depression. The results of the first camps were so encouraging that the government extended the system to include a larger number of unemployed.

The Swiss camps are a coöperative undertaking between the federal government, the cantonal government and local governments, and the Swiss Central Office for Voluntary Service, which represents the organizations interested in the problems of unemployed youth. Federal assistance is confined to providing subsidies for the private camps and to setting up the conditions under which these subsidies will be granted. The federal subsidy amounts

<sup>5</sup> See Kenneth Holland, *Youth in European Labor Camps* (American Council on Education, 1939).

to 40 per cent of the total expenses of the camp. Another 40 per cent is provided by the cantonal and communal governments, and the remainder of the expense must be met by the people for whom the work is done.

The Swiss camps are not confined in their aim, however, to providing work for the unemployed. It was found after approximately a year's trial that, while camps of this type assisted the young men during the time they were in the camps, when they returned to their communities they were little, if any, better trained to support themselves than before they went to the camps. Therefore, the Swiss decided to develop camps in which young men of special ability could obtain vocational training in fields where there was a good chance of obtaining employment.

In many respects the work camps which were established in the Scandinavian countries resembled those in Switzerland. Here, too, the principle of voluntary participation was strictly adhered to, and the government coöperated with private organizations, rather than attempting to administer the camps directly. In Sweden and Denmark, as in Switzerland, part of the expenses of the camps were met by voluntary contributions from individuals and organizations. In Norway the major portion of the expenses were provided in this way, with the state granting amounts to but one-third of the wages paid to the workers. Of course, it is also true that in the Scandinavian countries unemployment has been neither so extensive nor so prolonged as in some other countries.

In Sweden, as in Switzerland, there is considerable importance attached to relating the camp program to job placement. The Swedish government also requires that

all camp participants be registered in unemployment offices. Camp leaders must communicate with the nearest placement office at least once a week, to facilitate placing their men in ordinary occupations.

Vocational training for available jobs has been successfully developed at a number of the camps. A camp near Karlstad, for example, utilized the buildings from an abandoned iron mine to train young unemployed men of that vicinity for jobs as machinists and carpenters. Another camp near Goteborg was used to train young men from that area to be farmers. At one time there was a very active cobblestone industry in the Goteborg district; but with the development of new types of paving the quarries have gradually been abandoned, thus leaving a large number of young men without work. The Swedish government surveyed opportunities in Sweden, found that there were opportunities in agriculture, and established this camp to train the unemployed young men for the available jobs.

In both Sweden and Switzerland the educational program in the camps includes training in citizenship; but, unlike that in Germany, the political aim of the camps is not dominant.

In Norway and Denmark, government control over the camps was less than in Sweden. Norwegian camps have been administered by a private organization, the Central Committee for the Labor Army; but in Denmark the camps have been under the general supervision of the Ministry of Social Welfare, although they are run by private and local organizations. In both these countries the camps seemed to be in the class of temporary relief measures, not integrated with the job-placement

system as in Sweden. Denmark has given no vocational training in the camps, and such training has been given in Norway only so far as circumstances permitted. Denmark does not require camp participants to be registered in employment offices.

## VII

The labor camp movement in the United States dates from the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933, when the United States, the country which has been considered the land of wealth and opportunity, was in the depths of the worst depression of its history.

When Mr. Roosevelt was elected President, steps were taken immediately to set up a series of camps. The camp idea appealed to President Roosevelt personally because of his long interest in conservation of natural resources and his desire to assist unemployed young people. On March 31, 1933, the executive order providing for the Civilian Conservation Corps was signed, and the late Robert Fechner was appointed Director of the CCC camps to coördinate the activities of the Departments of War, Agriculture, Interior, and Labor.

The camps were set up, first, to give employment to unmarried young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five (the age limit was later changed to include unmarried men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-eight; at present the age limit is seventeen to twenty-three); second, to assist the families of the young men on relief rolls; and third, to conserve the natural resources of the United States. About 20,000 war veterans were also permitted to enroll in the CCC, but have been housed in separate camps.



While the CCC camps are essentially *work* camps, it is generally recognized that they cannot be justified on the basis of work done alone. The projects must also substantially benefit the enrollees if the camps are to justify their cost. Therefore, the training aspects of the camps must be continued and developed.

Whereas the CCC camps have provided for youth of limited social and educational background, the camps of the American Friends Service Committee have been developed to give college students work experience in areas of social and economic tension. These camps, while planned in the light of the needs of American students and social and economic conditions in this country, are modeled after the camps of the International Voluntary Service for Peace which began in Europe in 1921.

Americans frequently took part in these European work camps and became interested in their establishment in the United States. During the summer of 1934 the American Friends Service Committee, in coöperation with the Emergency Peace Campaign, organized a Voluntary Service Camp here in the United States to provide an opportunity for students and others to spend the summer doing hard physical labor on a worth-while project which could not otherwise be done, and at the same time to study the social and economic problems in the community near the camp.

The first venture was a success, and during the succeeding summers additional camps have been organized, until now, each summer, about six are organized, enrolling some two hundred college students of both sexes. Thus far the campers have tended to be a highly selected

group from the wealthiest colleges and universities in the East. As in Europe, camp members pay their own living expenses, which amount to about seventy-five dollars for two months. The young people are housed in schools, private residences, or other buildings which may be available. Their work usually consists of developing community recreational facilities, renovating or building workers' dwellings, clearing land, developing drainage systems, installing water lines, etc. Only those are encouraged to apply for admission to these camps who are willing to "Live coöperatively as a part of a group. Do hard physical labor. Impose self-discipline as a member of a democratically organized group. Study sympathetically the social and economic problems of the area in which the camp is located."

During the summer of 1936 a Junior Volunteer Work Camp was organized for young people of high-school age. The Progressive Education Association became interested in these projects, and during the summers of 1937, 1938, and 1939 additional camps have been organized by the American Friends Service Committee in coöperation with the Progressive Education Association, for young people who have completed their junior year at high school or are at least sixteen years old.

According to the announcements of the American Friends Service Committee: "Prospective campers should have a real interest in social and economic problems. They should be concerned to improve living conditions and be desirous to become useful citizens. They should have belief in the power of friendship and good will as opposed to force and violence. They should be willing,

also, to do hard tasks cheerfully and to impose upon themselves self-discipline as a member of a camp group."

The aim of the educational program in these American camps is to consider methods of achieving economic justice and social change without violence. Since about 4 per cent of the students working in these camps are from foreign countries, methods for the peaceful settlement of international disputes are also considered. Discussion groups are held during the evenings and on weekends under the leadership of men and women from the immediate vicinity of the camp, or individuals paid by the Society of Friends to go from camp to camp.

It would seem that these camps give high-school and college students a practical understanding of social and economic problems and a greater interest in the ways in which these problems can be solved by orderly processes. While only a few hundred young men and women have participated in these camps in the five summers that they have been in existence, they are increasing in popularity and may become an important means of supplementing with practical experience the academic training of students of sociology, government, and international affairs.

These International Voluntary Service projects, both in Europe and in the United States, require very nearly the same type of endurance and sacrifice that military training does, and in a sense are a "moral equivalent of war." The Scandinavian governments have recognized work service of this type as an alternative to military service.

During the summer of 1939 a group of prominent educators in New York sponsored a camp of forty American college students and twenty refugee students from

Europe. The young people worked on the grounds of the Hudson Shore Labor School for four hours each day and then spent the afternoons and evenings in discussions of problems facing the United States. So successful was this experimental camp that a new organization called "Work Camps for America" has been established to assist in developing on a wider scale the type of camp conducted so successfully on an experimental basis by the American Friends Service Committee. "Work Camps for America" organized camps during the summer of 1940 for college and high-school students and farmers and workers, which, while very much like the camps of the American Friends Service Committee, require that the campers work less than forty hours per week, thus allowing more time for field trips, surveys of conditions in the vicinity of the camps, and discussions of current social and economic problems.

In May 1934 a program of educational camps for unemployed women was established under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration.<sup>6</sup> On June 26, 1935, when the NYA was established, these camps were placed under its jurisdiction, and later were supported by NYA funds. During October of 1937, however, the educational camps for women as such were discontinued, partly because of their expense and partly because a program of resident agricultural centers that had been operating for some months proved to be of greater promise. These latter centers were developed so that young people from rural areas who could not be transported each day

<sup>6</sup>Palmer Johnson and Oswald L. Harvey, *The National Youth Administration* (Washington, 1938), p. 7.

to and from the centers could benefit from work-education programs. Some projects were also developed to take advantage of such existing facilities as those at Passamaquoddy and the Naval Ordnance Plant at South Charleston, West Virginia. The development of the resident centers is therefore a relatively recent phenomenon among the various projects for American youth.

At the present time there are about 27,000 young people in some 600 NYA resident center projects scattered widely over the United States. Whereas the CCC camps tend to enroll boys who have barely completed the eighth grade, the young people in the NYA resident centers average about second-year high school in their educational background. In the CCC camps the youths work forty hours per week, but in the NYA resident centers they work twenty hours and have related training for twenty hours each week. Without army control, the resident centers have experimented considerably with coöperatives and student self-government. From many points of view the NYA resident centers give better citizenship training than the CCC camps, which have tended to operate under the authoritarian philosophy of military organization.

While there is great room for improvement in the NYA resident centers—and from the standpoint of orderliness, sanitation, and output of work the CCC camps are considerably better—the administrative plan of the NYA permits greater local initiative, and, especially, greater participation of the young people in the basic activities of the projects. Whereas those participating in the NYA program are given the responsibilities of citizens within their project community, the enrollees in

the CCC camps are pretty largely told what they are to do and provided with all of their basic needs.

The recent development of the NYA resident centers does not imply that the CCC camps have failed, nor that the camps are to be supplanted by these newer institutions. It would seem, however, that the resident centers meet the needs of young persons who want and need vocational exploration and orientation better than the CCC camps, where forty hours of work per week on conservation projects is required.

#### CONCLUSION

Work camps of one type or another now exist for the major classes of youth in the United States. Only the CCC camps, however, reach a large number. Projects for young women are especially lacking. While neither the camps nor the resident centers provide in themselves a complete answer to all the needs, they do seem to deserve a permanent place along with the schools, social agencies, and various other projects for the care and training of American youth.

These work camps and resident centers provide the young people with experiences that are of definite value in preparing them for adult life and that are difficult to obtain elsewhere. In the first place, the programs are work-centered: the participants receive work experience. At the end of each day they are faced with the reality of their own accomplishments, possibly for the first time in their lives. Many are having a new experience by working in the out-of-doors in contact with those "rugged forces of nature" which seem to have had so profound an influence on the course of American life.

In the second place, the projects provide the experience of group living. For the first time many young people are forced to take into consideration the feelings and interests of individuals quite different from themselves. They must of necessity contribute unselfishly to the group life if they are to be accepted as members of the camp or resident-center community. Thus they are provided with a socializing influence that is beneficial for all, but especially for those from isolated rural areas.

In the third place, the young men and women go through an educational experience of an informal nature quite different from that which they have experienced in the established school systems. We have already mentioned the manual labor which is of itself a type of training. In all the camps or projects described above there is a good deal of informal interchange of ideas and experiences. The lecture method finds no place in labor camps. The discussion group in which each individual participates on a plane of equality is the educational technique of greatest usefulness in the camps.

The labor camp, which has already become a permanent institution in many countries, combines work and education, and for unemployed youth bridges the gap between school and permanent employment. Camps for high-school and college students, besides providing valuable work and educational experience, also offer American youth the opportunity to repay, by unselfish work service, a small part of the debt owed to the nation for the many privileges it has afforded.

While the labor camps and resident centers in the United States, as well as in many foreign countries, have been continued as independent agencies to give them am-

ple time to develop methods and techniques without the standardizing influence of established training and educational institutions, nevertheless, as the camps and resident centers are established on a permanent basis they should be carefully integrated with educational, vocational, employment, and adjustment activities of institutions already in existence. It is to be hoped that established schools and other training institutions in the United States will see in the labor camps a new technique for providing youth with practical experience better adapted to its needs and interests than the present academic school courses, and not an agency which can be used by school administrators as an excuse for not modifying their existing educational programs.





■

PART III

THE NEXT CAMPAIGN

■



## VII

### THE APPEAL OF TOTALITARIANISM

*George S. Pettee*

THE fear has grown in America since the turn of the century that American youth would perversely forsake the ways of the fathers and strike out in new directions. Such a fear is an ever-recurring product of the relation of older and younger generations, and need not be taken as especially significant by itself. But in this generation we have lost the capacity for rugged skepticism of even foolish terrors. We have watched impending doom take material presence too often.

The specific fear in America is that youth may be led away by some "Pied Piper," some preacher of an "alienism." The most feared of these "isms" are Fascism and Communism. In order to discuss realistically the possible active effect of such doctrines in America, and their appeal to youth, we must canvass a number of points. First, it may be well to deal with Fascism and Communism themselves, since these are so far subject to controversy that one can assume no precise common meaning of the terms. Second, we must examine America as it is today for the signs of social strength or the symptoms of social illness, of a pre-revolutionary fever. Third, we must examine the specific position of American youth today. Fourth, we may take up the means already in use to train youth for a life in the present system. Fifth, what judg-

ment can we reach as to the actual danger that youth will be attracted towards revolutionary action, and as to the effectiveness of counter measures?

At the present time it is difficult to offer any precise definition of Fascism or Communism. Until 1938 it was fairly widely held that they were opposed forms of social order, and the revolutionary character of Nazism had not yet become clear. There was more tendency to follow Trotsky in describing Stalin as a Fascist than there was to call Hitler a Bolshevik, or even a "brown Bolshevik." A great deal has happened since Munich to clarify the problem, but it has happened at such a pace that it has been impossible for observers to reach any agreed interpretations. However, it seems clear today that the real motives of Hitler and Stalin were not correctly gauged by the world before the attack on Finland. We can now say with confidence that, all matters of doctrine to the contrary notwithstanding, Hitler is a revolutionist, and Nazism is a revolutionary movement, fully equal to Jacobinism or Bolshevism in violence; and that Bolshevism may also mean again what it meant in 1919. Mussolini's Fascism becomes separable in this view, if only because it cannot fully participate in the great ambitions of the others.

The revision of our views on Nazism in the course of the last two years makes it possible, and necessary, to reëxamine our ideas as to its antecedents, its conditions of growth, its tactics and methods. It is very easy to forget that when we revise our ideas on the nature of an antagonist we must also revise our notions of how to deal with him.

In this case we must give up the "Pied Piper" theory

of Hitlerism. If this is a first-rate revolution, then it is not a merely clownish political stampede of the confused German people to a spellbinder. It is not simply the story of a lucky charlatan who promised everything the people wanted. The German history from Nietzsche to Hitler must be read with an eye to the sources of a revolutionary force, not merely in search of the first signs of confusion and eagerness for security.

The conditions which gave rise to Nazism are easy to describe in outline. Some of them, particularly the youth movement, are very well dealt with elsewhere in this volume.<sup>1</sup> The German people were put through a wringer from 1914 to 1933 in an unparalleled fashion. The German casualties in the First World War included two million dead. It has been pointed out by Professor Shotwell that the economic cost of the war to Germany was staggering. And the effects of the war in sapping popular morale and confidence in the traditional order have been fully described by other historians. The German people generally lost much of their accustomed faith in ordinary justice, in the relation of reward to effort, in the value of work and thrift.

After the war they had five more years of uncertainty — the years of civil strife, the occupation of the Ruhr, the inflation, the ruin of the middle class. They then had a brief illusory hope, followed by the depression. The classic expression of their developing sense of hopelessness is in the phrase "Little Man, What Now?" Only now at last is it apparent what a core of hatred of the traditional order lay in the heart of the Nazi movement, around which all the bitter, the resentful, and the adven-

<sup>1</sup> Chapter by R. H. Phelps, above.

turous rallied. The simplest summary of the conditions which produced Nazism is this: a generation of Germans lost all sense that hard work in the forms of the old order would bring any secure and adequate rewards. The first symptoms were restlessness, a romantic floundering, an intellectual and also an anti-intellectual search for new paths, a growing influence for the doctrines concerned with instinctive drives, a growing confusion which permitted every superstition to flourish, and a growing tendency to violence.

In all this development of the German situation there is one point which is for us one of unique significance. We know now that it was a pre-revolutionary period. It is also vastly better known, better understood, than the periods which preceded the French or the Russian revolutions. The information about pre-Nazi Germany goes far beyond anything comparable in scope and accuracy. This makes it a prime asset for us in any effort to avoid a similar result.

It has been felt that our danger lies in specific doctrines, in the introduction into America of Nazism from Germany, or of Communism from Russia. This point of view is a dangerous one. The German case alone is sufficient evidence. Germany escaped the danger of Russian Communism, but did not escape revolution. Our one danger is revolution. We might easily escape all the present "alien *isms*" yet succumb to revolution. We cannot possibly have cause to fear the "isms" if we can succeed in avoiding revolution.

One phase of the revolutionary process is well understood. This is the phase in which great masses join the revolutionary movement. This is a real phase, but be-

cause it is conspicuous its importance is overestimated. A much more important phase, which is generally ignored, is the earlier one in which the human material is created out of which a revolutionary instrument may later be forged. The critical change is the one by which people who are satisfied to pour their lives into the existing order lose their hopes and convictions. This change takes place largely at the youth level. People devoted to the old order die every year. People with no sense that the old ways offer opportunity or security are passing through adolescence. Such a process, the partial failure of recruitment, working over a twenty-year period, can undermine a social structure completely. If we can maintain a favorable balance in the equilibrium of increments and losses of loyalty, the "isms" will be helpless to affect us.

There is one critical point in the field of this battle, and one only: if American youth can continue to feel that the American order is adequate in opportunity and hope, that it is worth working in and for, that its purposes are stimulating and rewarding, we are in no danger from any side. Conversely, if such hope and faith are lost we will have new wine bursting old bottles with or without any ideas from other lands.

The problem therefore presents itself flatly; and it must not be mistaken for a problem of insulation. It is simply the problem of preserving the sense of an adequate common future. In order to do so we have no need to hunt Reds, or to expose them. We have to take stock, to examine the present internal condition of the American commonwealth. Where the gap between capacity and fulfillment is wide we must find means to close it.



Pending curative adaptation we may find it wise also to use palliatives, though we must not confuse them with permanent measures.

What then is the condition of America today? In the depth of the depression George Soule wrote a book on *The Coming American Revolution*, which described America as headed for a revolution, but a quite distant one, about two generations in the future. Can we check the diagnosis?

There is no issue to be drawn between stability and change in the American way of life. It would be ridiculous to deny that we are in the midst of very swift and tumultuous transition. Art, literature, music, industry, technology, and most significantly of all, science and philosophy, are all off soundings. The question is not, to change or not to change, it is simply whether America can break the ancient limitations of human social change, and change now by controlled adaptation instead of the old *ultima ratio* of violence with the wasteful hiatus of revolution.

This question depends upon two factors. The first of these is the degree of consciousness of the modern mind on the nature of the present situation. On this, at first glance, we must be pessimists. If we are to avoid revolution we must show a deeper consciousness than mankind has shown in the past. Yet on the record of twenty-five years it is too clear that a deeper consciousness either does not exist or is not yet effective. The First World War, the so-called post-war, and the drift into the second war have made it plain that human energies are not yet guided by any understanding of what the whole show is all about.

But how can this be? Are we not the children of the Enlightenment? Can we not conquer space and need, and disease and want? Have we not learned the new perceptions of Darwin and Marx, and Freud and Einstein?

The answer is mixed. The potential of modern knowledge is gigantic, but the application is puerile. We have mastered an almost serenely easy adaptation of our actions in relation to material needs. We have learned to "manipulate" masses of human energy through propaganda and organization; yet we show zero progress to date in the conscious selection of goals for action. Our best laid plans have left us with a bull-in-the-china-closet record.

We seem as far as ever, by any behaviorist standard, from knowing how to pick out unbetraying goals, ends free of vanity. Given the present state of all the world there is no closer adaptation of ends to desirable possibilities today than centuries ago. Yet this appearance may be too pessimistic. It is a possibility that though our knowledge of human society is still short of the point at which it can become effective, it is only just short of it. We have it in the record that we have followed stupid policies on a multitude of points. On agriculture, on war debts, on international trade, on labor and security, in boom and depression, we have drifted into wrong courses. In each case a multitude of the wise or the learned or the expert have approved the wrong course. But also, the sign of hope, in most cases voices have been raised which in retrospect have had a clear right to say "I told you so."

In some cases this has been luck. But in many it has not. Those who said we could not refuse imports and collect the war debts were right. Those who said in

1919 that American agriculture had been overstimulated by the war, and must face adjustments or disaster, were right. The most important thing we have yet to learn is how to recognize the right methods of such prophets, and how to make a consciousness so formed the guide to action instead of a voice crying in a wilderness. We know how to do anything we want to. We know how to generate social and political power. It is not beyond belief that we may be stumbling on the brink of learning how, in a poet's words, "right may find its appropriate might."

The second factor, after consciousness of our situation, in a solution of our ills is just this one, how to make such a consciousness the directive of action. It is here that we may properly be pessimistic, for truth in the present world is served no better than our myriad false ideas. The critical centers in society whose function it is to create and maintain our culture, our knowledge, the patterns of our way of life, are doing their work in a promiscuous fashion. Our intellectuals are maintaining and developing all existing notions, and therefore, obviously, all false ones. Our schools, shaped to the free demands of the last century, offer a familiarity with intellectual chaos as an education. The student is initiated into all sides of every controversy, and then left in precious freedom to find his way where his teachers cannot.

The American society may be described as one in which for a generation the development has been toward disintegration. The forces which integrate a culture by introducing a survival of the fittest elements, and the rejection of the unfit, have had a losing battle against the

forces which introduce new confusions and preserve old ones.

In essence this illustrates merely a case of the old principle: what is everybody's business is nobody's business. Under our misreading of the idea of freedom we have assumed that "public opinion" or the "people" must be the sole agent of progressive selection, and it has been considered a little indecent in America to suppose otherwise. Actually, in the plausible guise of familiar principle, we have slipped in a fiction which the founders of our democracy never conceived. Walter Lippmann, Thurman Arnold, Farrell and Steinbeck, have restated for our times the unreality of the "reasonable man," the fallacy of conceiving of the public or the masses as an automatic Utopian agency. The common man simply cannot make the decisions between right and madness in the myriad problems presented. His thumbs turn up or down by habit or by fad and not by reason when the world dins questions at him on everything from euthanasia to the League of Nations. He does an astonishingly good job, but in the functioning process of a human culture he needs help.

There is one way, perhaps, in which the masses of mankind actually solve all problems in the long run. But this is not through continuous rational discrimination. The simplest reading of history shows that if the masses make great decisions at all, they make some of them through great revolutions, which may reveal reason to the historian but which certainly are not products of rational consciousness. Any society, to long endure, requires the critical free consent of its people; but this must be a consent or confidence given to the decisions of

individual minds, as we now consent to be guided by the professions within their areas of competence. It cannot be based on thought and decision by the people themselves.

The failure of America to develop centers of conscious guidance can be described in detail. Our federal government is itself ineffective in its organization for such a function. Our politicians have no such thing in mind. Our parties are oriented toward no such task. Our press, our schools, our centers of learning and the arts, are all designed to compete for popularity, not to solve our problems. Our critics, curiously, have recognized the functional failure of every part of the whole organism, yet each of them deals with only one part, and assigns the remedy to some other part of whose equal failure the particular critic is ignorant. Behind the gigantic buck-passing which disguises the general malfunctioning as a series of limited failures with near-by remedies, there looms the general picture of increasing disintegration with no Utopian agency to save it.

Our diagnosis of America, at first glance, must be that some of the major symptoms of a pre-revolutionary condition are present. The gap between potentiality and fulfillment is wide, and is not growing narrower. The institutions whose task it would be to close this gap are not functioning in healthy fashion. Further, the old deep confidence in continuity has passed. Very few young Americans are now passing into adult life confident that hard work and thrift will bring reasonably secure rewards. Few believe that prices and wages are reasonably just. Few believe that good work gets its due, and that the predatory or the parasitic is sure to fail. Very few

there must be who still believe that marriage and a home and work will mean grandchildren around the table at Thanksgiving forty years hence.

There are various minor symptoms which may be mentioned in addition. One of these is the presence of virulent criticism. We are all accustomed to novels and plays which paint the hopeless aspects of the scene. The intellectuals in general have themselves lost faith in the present order, though they have not coagulated around any projected alternative. We also have a rising tension of politics as reflected in the vote. We also have a widely noted increase in the disposition to gamble, though this could be a side-tracked version of the old national custom of speculation. And we have an increasing public appetite for nostrums, from monetary schemes to astrology. All of these were to be found in Germany before Hitler.

There are, however, many mitigating factors also. One of the charges against capitalism in Europe has been that it was drab. One can hardly repeat that here without some qualification. Another source of discontent which has contributed to modern revolutions has been the rebellion of youth against old moral conventions. In Europe the anti-respectable and anti-old-fashioned tendencies of youth poured into the major stream of revolution. Here our freedom in a new land of mixed conventions has left youth free to find its own new ways too easily for the same repercussions to occur. Youth has easily assumed the right to be itself, and has hardly become self-conscious in the process. Another thing we lack is any general inoculation with a single revolutionary doctrine. In Germany millions of people, Socialist or Communist,

had learned doctrines which never went into practice, but which left a stamp on their minds, an alternative tradition, available in crude form whenever familiar paths might be abandoned. In America no large minority is familiar with any given doctrine which might compete with tradition.

Further there are some sectors of the national life — movies, aviation, and public administration, to mention only three — which still offer outlets for ambitious talents. And further, we still have a great margin of wealth to rest on. Last, but not least, the spectacle in the other hemisphere throws a great advantage toward peaceful solutions here. A great revolution in one country is always a favorable factor for reforms in others.

In spite of all these favorable factors, however, we have a dubious situation. There can be no doubt that American youth are not yet revolutionary, but they are certainly not filled with the faith of their fathers. We must admit that they are building up a layer in the population ready to follow a call to action in any future crisis. We must examine then the possible would-be leaders.

At present one may feel that there is little to fear. We can largely discount in advance any appeal in the name of a ready-made doctrine. Communism or Fascism may have a considerable influence in this country, but they will not actually make an American revolution. The exact relation of a pre-revolutionary organization to a revolution is uncertain at best. Lenin knew what he wanted, and was known, and had few followers in 1917. Hitler may or may not have known what he wanted, was badly underestimated, and had many followers.

Could a Fritz Kuhn or a Pelley turn out to be a Hitler, or Browder turn out to be a Lenin? Huey Long would have been a more credible threat. It can be hazarded, that no figure now known in this country has the makings of a Lenin or a Hitler, and no organization now in existence will make an American revolution.

As a diagnosis, then, we have a youth group which is demoralized, fair material for an instrument of power politics, but no one in sight with the talents to forge it into such an instrument. One more point must be dealt with, the present efforts to preserve the social discipline of youth during this provisional period.

We have, of course, the whole set of institutions which have long borne the task of training youth. In this country as everywhere, this is the joint task of family and school, with such subordinate agencies as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Y.M.C.A., Four-H Clubs, and a few others. In America the family plays a less important role than in most other countries, and the school a more important one. One thing to notice in any attempt to draw analogies from other countries in connection with our youth problems is that the American school system holds students much farther into the upper age brackets than anywhere else. The problem of finding a job is faced at a much higher average age here than in any other country. Also, our colleges, however hodge-podge they may be in many respects, are certainly not drab. Youth soaked in football and fraternities will not be quite such easy game for the vender of excitement as youth which finds mass-meetings a new thrill.

The old-line subordinate agencies need no special attention. What we have to notice is: are the schools meet-



ing the new conditions? Are they finding any new means by which to give youth a confident orientation toward adult life? Or are they also drifting toward palliatives, trying to renew the faith of youth in existing society by singing patriotic songs, depending on auto-suggestion to keep up in youth a faith which is no longer self-renewing? It is impossible to give a quantitative measure. One might count the number of songs sung, but no one can determine exactly the number of teachers who have only ritual to offer, or the number of teachers who have some grasp of a not-purely-wishful hope. But we can hardly expect hundreds of thousands of teachers or millions of students to deviate far from the pattern of the people as a whole. What concrete evidence we can find supports this view. If we look for any definition of the life for which the student is preparing, we must find that the American schools are as confused as American society itself.

The question arises, How can the schools and other agencies for the training of youth adapt themselves for new burdens? They cannot produce the same product as formerly by going through the same old motions under new conditions. Can they find definite measures by which to combat demoralization? Is a positive program for re-moralization possible? How can we avoid a negative answer to these questions? Teachers can hardly teach a morale which they do not feel themselves, or indoctrinate youth in a consensus which does not exist. The usual historical source of any moral consensus and common faith is a great movement which dominates a country and in which the schoolteachers themselves have since grown up. That was our situation in 1910, when

American students were under teachers who were themselves all products of the faith that dated back to the American Revolution, and beyond that to the settlement.

Certain elements in that faith died with the passing of the frontier, and others have died in the crisis of the modern world. The problem may be put: Is it conceivable that the schools can find new means to make up for the new difficulties? We cannot, in a period of transition, regain stability by imitating it. The problem cannot be reduced to training youth for a future which will be like the past. But even a period of great social transition permits personal orientation. This may have to be more vague, more skeptical, more self-reliant. But it is not impossible to preserve a high level of morale in youth. It must be a morale founded on a hope beyond the unforeseeable uncertainties, and can only be a worthless imitation if it is founded on any evasion of uncertainties.

No genius has appeared to tell us how to keep the treasures of our heritage while escaping from its shackles. We do not know how to allocate our tremendous potentialities or how to allocate the use of the products. This is simply because we cannot tell which sacrifices have to be made in old institutions, old customs, old rights. The case of our building industry during the last decade is a concrete illustration, where property rights, the strategic trading positions of material producers, contractors, labor, and land values nailed up by our land-tax system, hold us in a half stall. We could tear down our ugly cities and rebuild beautiful ones, but we cannot move. Can we make youth believe in the golden future of America while America stumbles at half speed?

If so, there is only one way to do it. Two elements must be combined in this. First, we must never stop teaching the possibilities of modern human life. Second, we must find ways to give every young American the sense of pride in fruitful work.

Our society has to change either gradually but swiftly, or by revolutionary destruction and reconstruction. Only a growing crop of younger citizens imbued with rich hopes to strive for, and with a sense of the waste of the revolutionary method, and with a patient but vigorous capacity to work out a snarled situation, can carry us through.

A combination of school and job has always been the best and easiest solution of the task. For those who cannot continue school, and who cannot find jobs, some other solution must be found. It is just for these that the CCC exists. This agency has something in common with prohibition, "an experiment noble in purpose. . . ." But it is to be hoped that it will not share the same fate. For with all its weaknesses of scope and method, it has in its sole hands one of the most crucial functions in the American social process.

We have at present about four million unemployed youth. The CCC has never at any one time dealt with more than about one-eighth of this number. There is of course no use in discussing it on the basis that it should handle all. With the cross issue of economy dominant in this election year, the whole question of the future scale of operation is highly speculative. However, from the point of view of the task, it is clear that the provision of a supervised work year under reasonable discipline for a million or more at a time would not be unduly large.

The present setup is perhaps as inadequate in method as in scale. There has been little success in lending a sense of pride, of national service, to the work. Few boys are ever stirred, or feel any touch of aspiration or sense of honor in it. Traditions of this kind are hard to create, but much could be done. The CCC should keep its combination of work with an educational program. But it should make the educational program more seriously a chance to learn something worth knowing to the boy. It should try to make the camp year an exciting experience, as nearly as possible the equal of college as something to look back upon. And it should most of all engage in projects above a tiddley-winks level. There is no reason why the CCC could not build air fields, or really notable recreation centers in state or national parks, works which the boys would see or hear of again, and be a little bit impressed with. The CCC should acquire a reputation as a man factory, not as a mere warden of sub-marginal youth.

The significant thing in a true pre-revolutionary situation is not the presence of fascinating seducers of the people. It is the susceptibility of the people themselves. Only a sense of social stalemate, a cramping dead-center balance of established customs which block a clear road forward, when the people cannot avoid a consciousness of the great possibilities and the miserable performance, can make a people at last eager for new leaders and send them scouring about after charlatans and demagogues. In the long run this can be prevented only by maintaining a reasonably close realization of what the people see and know is possible. A society which would permanently deny a decent living standard to many, which would

permanently stall at the great tasks to be done, while unused factors of production lie around to the extent of eight or ten million of unemployed, would be sowing a wind, and would have its harvest within a generation. No ostrich policy will have any effect whatever on the outcome.

What we have to recognize is quite simple. We cannot by any incantations induce in youth a replica of their fathers' faith, of which the center was confidence in the American future. Nor can we sell them a rosy picture of that future in concrete terms before we see it ourselves. But we can at least give them a sense of their own powers, and a sense that the future, though we cannot describe it as a simple continuation of the past, or as just in the pattern of any existing "ism," can surely be made a good one by men with a realistic sense of their own human powers and limitations.

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## VIII

### TOWARD A MORE DYNAMIC DEMOCRACY

*Charles William Taussig*

I RECENTLY attended a conference at a mid-western university where certain aspects of democracy were to be discussed. The moderator, hoping to keep the conferees to their subject, suggested that the conference first determine what it meant by "democracy." The meeting lasted two days and never reached the subject it had intended to discuss. At the close it was still endeavoring to agree on the meaning of the word "democracy."

Words, like old shoes, frequently become misshapen through constant use, and in the manner of dilapidated footwear acquire comfortable and conforming characteristics. The word "democracy" too frequently takes on any meaning that suits one's own political and social philosophy. To some, it connotes a vague Utopian dream; to others, it is a weapon of defense against those minorities whose ideas are distasteful to them. This defense attribute of democracy is achieved by giving such elasticity to the Bill of Rights that, when sufficiently stretched, it will snap and knock a minority agitator right off his soap box. "Liberty" and "democracy" are frequently used as though they were synonymous. This confusion of meaning is not uncommon; and, particularly

today, when the world is in turmoil over conflicting ideologies, there is much inexact usage of words having social, economic, and political meaning.

Liberty is the state of being exempt from the domination of others; it is freedom of action so far as this may be without trespassing on the rights of others. Democracy is a technique of government by which liberty can be achieved. It is a political system in which government is directly exercised or controlled by the people. When government is directly exercised by the people, it is pure democracy; when it is controlled by them through their elected representatives, it is representative democracy. Madison, in No. 10 of *The Federalist*, refers to a pure democracy as a democracy and to a representative democracy as a republic. He made a strong case against the United States of America becoming a democracy; and, in the terminology of that period, this country was created as a republic. The federal and state governments are all representative democracies, but in many small towns in the United States the form of government is pure democracy.

In recent years, certain important changes have taken place in our system of representative democracy which promise to strengthen popular government. The two controls which the people have always had over their elected representatives have been the ballot and public opinion. In the past, public opinion has served more as a means of defining election issues than as a guide and check on the actions of government officials while in office. The revolutionary change in the art of communication and the development of the motion picture have rapidly altered this, and more and more our representa-

tives in government give instant heed to public opinion as it reaches them by wire, wireless, and through the press. Today the people are better informed on matters of public interest, and they are aware of their new power to make use of this information. The ballot is no longer a blank check to a particular political party to interpret an evasive party platform as it sees fit. Pressing matters of public policy need not await election day for decision. The people now raise issues, debate them, arrive at a decision, and insist on action between elections.

A case in point was the almost instantaneous response in the matter of transferring American ships to Panama after the passage of the Neutrality Act of 1939. It has been estimated that over 100,000 national and local discussion groups and forums scattered all over the country participated in the debate on the Neutrality Bill. The principal legislators representing both sides of the question discussed it on national radio networks. These broadcasts in many cases served as a source of information which local groups used at their round tables. Weekly, sample polls were taken of public opinion on this issue and these were published in the press. Congress was constantly aware of any shift in public opinion. Almost every phase of the question was literally and figuratively aired — except the quiet work of the shipowners' lobby to evade the proposed restrictions on American shipping. Congress had adjourned when the proposal to transfer the American ships to Panama was made. Within forty-eight hours a substantial number of congressmen and senators representing all parties had telegraphed or telephoned the Executive Branch of the government their opposition to the proposed transfer. They had heard in



no uncertain terms from their constituents. The issue raised was moral rather than legal, but a well-informed public which actively participated in the making of that law was able instantly to make a decision and to see that it was carried out.

The entire episode of the Neutrality Act was perhaps the first completely successful case where the people directed legislation while it was on the floor of Congress. In the matter of the Senate's failure to ratify the United States' participation in the World Court some years prior to the Neutrality Act, we witnessed the phenomenon of a successful attempt to misuse and misrepresent public opinion. This matter was not as widely debated throughout the country as the Neutrality Bill; but, on the day before the final vote in the Senate, Father Coughlin made a violent demagogic speech against ratification and urged his radio listeners to flood their senators with telegrams of protest. It is definitely known that this pressure changed a sufficient number of votes at the last moment to defeat ratification. Coughlin tried the same thing with the Neutrality Bill. This time, however, his efforts proved ineffective, since Congress was able to distinguish between communications representing thoughtful public opinion and those emanating from irresponsible pressure groups.

These wide-spread discussions on active issues of public policy are of great significance. They may well develop into a new type of democratic technique, which will lead to neither pure democracy nor representative democracy, in their technical sense, but to a sort of dynamic democracy that will include the best features of the two more orthodox systems. Certainly this direct influence of the

people themselves on their representatives will tend to dramatize the democratic idea. Heretofore, active interest in public questions has been almost dormant between elections. During the campaigns debate and discussion of issues become accelerated, but usually along emotional rather than intellectual lines. The demonstration that public discussion of important problems reaches Congress and definitely and quickly affects their action gives the average citizen an actual and not merely a theoretical voice in his government.

The doctrine of *laissez-faire* or non-interference by government with the citizen is rapidly being discarded in the United States; not because of any positive desire on the part of the people to be regulated but because they are becoming aware that only through government intervention can the iniquities in our social and economic life be remedied. Certain industries have always demanded tariff protection. The farmer now demands subventions to equalize the price of what he sells and the inflated price of the tariff-protected goods he buys. The government in return for subsidies granted the farmer demands the right to have some control over how much the farmer produces. Labor demands government protection against excessively low wages and has a moral and economic right to back up this demand. The people, from whom all political power is derived, have a right and a duty more directly to participate in their own government, to whom they are giving this ever-increasing power to regulate their economic lives. It is only through greater participation by the average citizen in his government that the building up of an uncontrollable bureaucracy can be prevented. The complexities of the modern world de-

mand greater participation of government in its affairs, and democracy, if it is to continue as a political system, will require much more of the individual citizen. It may be true that this is a government of laws and not of men. It is equally true that men make the laws; and what is more important, men administer them. To attempt to disassociate men and laws in a democracy is unrealistic.

## II

One hears much about lack of the dramatic element in democracy as compared with totalitarian systems. If drama were confined to regimented mass activities and deification of individual leaders, there would be some truth in this assertion. The inspirational and dramatic elements in democracy are none the less there because of their spiritual and almost transcendental nature. Once the average citizen is fully aware of his identity with his government and commences to exercise his responsibility, there will be no dearth of drama in active citizenship. The important thing is not only to educate the citizen, and particularly the young citizen, to a sense of responsibility toward his country, but to make him conscious of his own civic potency. Education for democracy should bend its efforts to identifying the individual with the state — a state which is the sum of its citizens, a state which has all the civic virtues and vices of its most humble voter. The state as something apart, as an end in itself with godlike attributes, is a Fascist conception. The young Fascist serves it with joy and grovels before it in fear, but never becomes of its substance. In a democracy the citizen also serves, but he serves his collective self, not an artificial abstraction created by a ruling

clique. Democracy can have all the drama inherent in Fascism, but the principal actor in that drama must be the individual.

Oneself I sing, a simple separate person  
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Young people, particularly those who have suffered through lack of employment, are more than willing to devote themselves to the public interest, whether it be through manual work or through participating in the discussion of community and national problems. But they want to feel that their efforts, whatever they may be, make some definite contribution to their country. And that, I believe, is the crux of the problem of giving a more dynamic quality to our Democracy. We must find ways and means for greater participation of our people in the life of the community and of the country. The growing popularity of forums and discussion groups is a step in the right direction. They will require many competent discussion-group leaders, and it should be part of the curriculum of the educational institutions of the country to develop them. The Federal Government has not been unmindful of this need, and through the Office of Education is encouraging not only the creation of local forums but the teaching of the round-table technique in schools. Radio, too, has made possible developments in the realms of national discussion that were heretofore impossible.

It seems to me, however, that we can go much further than this in creating an opportunity for the individual to participate in his government. It is within the power of many government officials, local and national, to create

committees of citizens — on which youth would naturally have a place — to advise with them on problems having to do with their public responsibilities. The creation of such committees has considerable importance. Their contribution to government may be great or slight, depending on circumstances and the make-up of the committee. Even where the committee is only moderately useful, the effect on the citizen is considerable. The official or quasi-official status given to the individual by such an appointment gives him a sense of importance and responsibility that serves to dramatize his citizenship in his own mind and in the minds of his neighbors. Such groups of citizens frequently develop sufficient initiative to tackle important social and economic problems in their communities. They can be tied in with private, civic, and philanthropic organizations in such a way that the work of these institutions and their contact with governmental bodies are made more effective. Such advisory committees, I believe, will tend to diminish the power of pressure groups. Pressure groups have their place; but, as their power increases, the trend is usually toward indulging in power politics, which, carried to an extreme, is the antithesis of democracy. Pressure groups are usually created to fight the government; advisory committees, in a sense, participate in government and effect their ends through coöperation rather than antagonism and opposition.

### III

If the United States consisted of forty-eight states, each speaking a different language, the problems confronting our democracy would indeed be difficult. One realizes the immensity of such a problem when contemplating

the possibility of a United States of Europe as a basis for the peace of that continent. And yet, I do not believe that we have ever taken full advantage of our common tongue in developing the dynamic quality of our own system of government. We still suffer from the myopia of sectionalism. Part of the plan for developing cultural and economic relations between the United States and the countries of South America is an exchange of students and also the general encouragement of tourist travel. We would do well if we adopted the same ideas in our own country.

It would help no end toward developing a national point of view to provide for large-scale travel projects within our own country for our youth. A federal subsidy to schools and colleges to enable students to visit other parts of the country than those in which they reside would be a strong impetus toward better citizenship. As part of such a program we could provide useful work for young people in building youth hostels. Such comingling of youth from various parts of the country might serve to encourage the development of folk pageants, of local arts and crafts, and at the same time create a more intelligent national outlook and stimulate community pride and loyalty. The inspirational value of discovering our country at first hand, of learning in this manner of the joys and sorrows, of the triumphs and defeats of our fellow citizens, is too obvious to require amplification.

A visitor recently made a trip into the Kentucky mountains to see a National Youth Administration work project. The project was the building of a small rural school house. An eighteen-year-old NYA worker took the

visitor on a tour of inspection. He told her that prior to employment by NYA he had never had a hammer or a saw in his hand. Nevertheless, after several months of work on the small school building under expert supervision, he felt competent to do this type of manual work. The schooling of the boy had ceased when he was thirteen years old and for five years he had had absolutely nothing to do. After having shown the visitor through the little school house, he took her to one side of the building. Pointing with obvious thrill and pride to a section of concrete foundation, he said, "I poured that." On further questioning, it became evident that the youngster was aware that he had made a contribution to society and to his country. Those few cubic feet of concrete were a tangible evidence of his citizenship, and he knew it and was proud of it. Time and again, when I have personally visited work projects of NYA boys and girls, I have questioned them to discover whether they felt that there was a value in the public work that they were doing which meant to them more than just not being idle. In almost every case, they were conscious that for the first time they had a tangible stake in their community and in their country.

Here again is a means of dramatizing citizenship and at the same time making an attack on the problem of unemployment. Public works, whether strictly governmental or tied in with the educational institutions, as is the case of the Student Work Program of the National Youth Administration, gives young people a chance to make a tangible public contribution. It differs from the Nazi work camp in two important points: the work is voluntary and the need of the individual to have employ-

ment is stressed equally with the social usefulness of the work itself.

A short time ago I sat in conference with a group of distinguished adults and some young people from the National Youth Administration. The young people had been invited so that we might get their point of view on plans that were being formulated for a certain government youth project. They were obviously pleased they were being consulted, and discussed the program with an amazingly impersonal attitude and considerable maturity. There was one twenty-one-year-old boy at the conference with whom I was particularly impressed. I questioned him as to what he had done before getting an NYA job. He told me that he had graduated from high school at fifteen and for three years had fruitlessly looked for work, and finally had become enrolled in the National Youth Administration. I asked him to tell us frankly what his impressions were, during those three years, of the patriotic training he had received in school concerning "equality of opportunity," "liberty," etc., etc. His answer was that, after a year or so of searching for an opportunity to exercise his citizenship, he had begun to think that "all this patriotic stuff was a lot of baloney." Symbolism has its place in democracy as well as in other forms of government, but it is no reflection on the patriotism of an unemployed youth or adult if he gets a greater thrill out of the sense of security afforded by a good job than out of doffing his cap as the flag goes by.

Young people of America are becoming conscious that they are entitled to a definite place in society. There are certain rights and privileges which belong to them as a heritage of their citizenship. That they are aware of this



is made evident by the number of youth groups and other organizations interested in the welfare of youth. And yet, this awakening has only just begun. For too many of our young people are apathetic. It is this group that is fair game for the dictator-minded leader, whether he be Fascist, Communist, or reactionary capitalist. Labeled "the masses," the people — and particularly the youth — become the victims of old and new ideological tyrannies. There is no place in a true democracy for "the masses." Our masses must become coöperating individuals, each with his own personal dignity, each able to claim that he too was made in the image of God. That education must play an important role in bringing this to pass is obvious. To rely on education alone, however, is to ignore fundamentals. Personal dignity comes with decency, and decency means among other things a job that will make secure such material considerations as food, shelter, medical care, and recreation.

We must not forget that democracy is a political system and not this or that theory of economics. It is the job of such a political system, if it is to survive, to provide all of the people with these fundamental decencies. The economic system it adopts to make this possible is of secondary importance. If we have a genuine belief in democracy, we will deprive no individual of his right to advocate and to work for any social or economic system he chooses — no matter how far it departs from our present concept of capitalism — if he thinks such a system will better his condition. We must, however, be alert to detect efforts to destroy democracy under the guise of movements to change or even to maintain our present economic system. Indeed, capitalism is as good a camou-

flag for subversive activities as socialism. The unemployed, young or old, who submit to the indignity of enforced idleness without complaint, without active effort to change the system that is responsible for their condition, are not exercising their citizenship. They too are the enemies of democracy.

If we are to continue to exist as a Democracy, it is essential that citizenship shall be more than an abstract symbol. It is necessary for the average citizen to assume an active role in our national life, not merely by doing his economic job, as important as that is, but by contributing something of himself to the public welfare.

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## IX

# CONSTRUCTIVE EDUCATION

*Robert Ulich*

IN THE United States there live today approximately twenty and a half million young people between sixteen and twenty-four years of age. One half of them are in school; of the ten million who have left it, some four million are idle. Of those who have work a certain minority are only partially employed. Thus unemployment among out-of-school youth may be estimated to be around 40 per cent.<sup>1</sup> That means that the United States has its highest unemployment among the age levels in the most malleable, sensitive, and consequently most critical years of adult or early adult life. According to expert opinion there is not much hope that this deplorable state of things will be considerably modified during the next decade.

In a publication of the Harvard Business School on *Business and Modern Society*, one of the contributions ends with the pessimistic statement that our modern means of regulating industry are so insufficient that we have to count upon chronic unemployment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John Chamberlain, "Our Jobless Youth: A Warning," in *Democracy's Challenge to Education*, prepared by Beulah Amidon. (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1940), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Sumner H. Slichter, "The Adjustment to Instability," in *Business and Modern Society*, ed. by Malcolm P. McNair and Howard T. Lewis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938).

These are facts of greatest concern, not only for the statesman and the industrial leader, but also for the educator, since in our modern society the schools, as agencies which prepare for life, cannot be separated from the economic and political conditions of society. Now the educator, facing the problem of unemployment, finds himself in the same situation as every other serious observer. He cannot but realize that the approach to this great issue cannot center exclusively on unemployment as such, but that any thoughtful attempt at relieving it needs a much more comprehensive attack. This is true first because the training of an individual for the purpose of either avoiding or withstanding the danger of unemployment must begin much earlier than unemployment itself begins. Secondly it is true because a society with continual unemployment is a sick society — not only because many of its members suffer, but because it rests, itself, on weak foundations, and even those who feel themselves rather safe ought to have at least a bad conscience about it.

So far educational policy has tried to adjust itself to the industrial crisis through prolongation of school attendance. Perhaps it is even too flattering to speak in such polite terms as policy, or adjustment. The boys and girls simply stayed, and there they were. Now I am the last to deny that prolonged education can be of great value. But it must be the right education; the schools must serve for something useful both to their students and to society, and they must not simply be parking places.

But where to find the criteria for what the schools ought to do in the face of a society with critical unem-

ployment? This question cannot be answered on the basis of mere traditional thinking. It is true that we need much more historical knowledge in the field of education than we generally have. But this very knowledge would teach us that the great pioneers in education were both historically minded, in that they tried to learn from the ideas and adventures of the past, and unhistorically minded, in that they were not afraid of a clear and courageous realization of the particular needs and tasks of their own time as compared with previous ages.

Such a realization, of course, cannot begin if we just tinker around with the curriculum or shift the eight-four pattern of the school structure to the six-three-three pattern and back. Nor will we do enough if we diligently discuss the proportion of liberal versus vocational subjects in the training of modern youth. In problems of curriculum not only the subject but also the quality of teaching and the spirit which pervades the educational process are of highest significance. One teacher in his attempt to present to his pupils profound values of humanity may talk about his subject in a dry, merely materialistic manner, and his colleague in the workshop may reveal the mechanical laws working in a lathe in such a way that his students acquire a deeper and more lasting respect for nature than they obtained in the other lesson which dealt with mankind. Unfortunately the reality is that we have very few vocational teachers with such an inspirational and philosophical mind. But why should they not acquire it?

With such, and other, contemplations one can spend very much time and labor and be sure that he will never be refuted. That is the reason that we have so many

books on pedagogy. But the deepest educational concerns from which to receive valid and guiding criteria applicable also to problems of curriculum must be sought on another level than what the typical textbooks on principles of education consider.

## II

It is rather futile to attempt to formulate a supreme goal of education which is completely unambiguous and to which everybody would agree. Some conceive of education as a way of teaching other people how to develop harmonious thinking and acting personalities. Other people emphasize more the social aspect of man, trying to lead the young toward coöperation with their fellow men and being good citizens. A third group lay the main emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge. But they are not so far from one another as they often think. For each of these goals includes to a certain extent the others, and the difference is not so much one of essential and self-exclusive qualities, but of different accentuation of capacities which are all to a certain extent necessary to mould a man as we want him to be.

In addition, all these objectives have one common denominator. They presuppose that man possesses *character*, i.e., a pervasive energy which creates in him the desire for activity, not just for some random doing, but for doing based on purposes and decisions. If we lay emphasis on this evaluating quality we generally speak of an *ethical* character. It combines initiative with directedness of this initiative toward a worthy goal. Of course, other features in the growth of a personality must also be regarded in a full educational process. But what we need in

face of the danger of unemployment, either of ourselves or of our fellow citizens, is not only the power to withstand its disintegrating influence on our personality, and a strong sense of responsibility for our suffering brothers, but also energy to drive the evil away, before it has got its grip too severely on us and our society. Only on the basis of these qualities will another attitude, essential for a strong society, develop — the attitude of experimentalism. So we will always have to rely on character as this combination of initiative and value-consciousness which we have emphasized. Otherwise we may run into the danger, as many of us already have, of considering unemployment as a completely inescapable fate. In great plagues of economic depression, nations as well as individuals are subject to inevitable forces and may for a certain length of time be incapable of procuring work; but a society which takes unemployment for granted is more apt to contract this economic disease than one endowed with constructive initiative.

During the past six years I have observed political emigration, and I dare say that many of the hardships I saw among the emigrants and immigrants were at least comparable to the privations connected with economic unemployment. And it has been astonishing to see how even in this extreme and fatal exposure the degree of energy of the individual was a decisive factor for his future. Most of those who were not afraid of beginning anew, of taking any work for the beginning, even if much below their previous profession, not only found something to do, but also found something without taking anything away from others. They *created* work through their initiative, and quite a few of them are now useful

employers in different parts of the world, alleviating instead of increasing unemployment in their new home countries.

Now I do not say that we can educate everybody toward this kind of efficiency. But surely everything is not as it ought to be if we read in the newspapers that the flow of migrant farmers to California has started again and that "the ancient jalopies of the Okies and Arkies are moving in force through the border stations." — "Unless a miracle happens," so the article in the *New York Times* of March 2 continues, "these newcomers are bound to join their predecessors in rural slums, in ditch-bank camps, or in Federal migratory camps. Whatever dreams of work and plenty they may be carrying with them are destined to turn into bitter disappointment. For they are coming to a land which has little if any place for them in its farm economy, and for the most part they are not fitted by training and experience to become cogs in that farm economy."

These desolate farmers seemingly react simply in terms of conditioned reflexes — identifying California with the land of hope without investigating the reality. But there is another danger arising in our modern society. A considerable part of modern men and young men are on the way toward developing a concept of security which smells fatally of the attitude of European civil service officials, for whom neither work, nor a full life, but the pension, seems the only goal and content of existence. It is more than understandable that young people who have before them unemployment with all its paralyzing consequences want first of all a certain degree of security, because security is the basis of pro-



ductive work and normal human development. On the other hand, we all know that security, instead of being considered as the basis for an active life, can become the end of life; and reliance on relief can become a psychological handicap to a man's full maturity and self-reliance, even though he can rightly claim public support if he is jobless in consequence of circumstances beyond his power.

We must not wonder that 60 per cent of the youths appearing in the well-known Maryland Report<sup>3</sup> consider the problem of economic security as synonymous with the youth problem in general. For the hungry and jobless, food and work are the primary concerns, and everything else comes later. Nor can we wonder that these young people are more or less in favor of collective intervention for getting adequate wages. But it ought to concern us that only 10 per cent of these 13,500 young people believe in individual effort, that the majority of them are critical if not cynical about one of the responsibilities which in a democracy ought to be most highly regarded, namely the political. And it ought to concern us that these youths are, mildly speaking, so indifferent about democratic values that it might take only some kind of an American Hitler to win them over to any other kind of political ideology. Even the fact that only 4 per cent are for a "new economic system" does not prove their loyalty to the American tradition; it merely proves their indifference, which in periods of crisis is perhaps the worst of all vices, and the best tool for dictators.

<sup>3</sup> For a short summary of the educationally most important points in the Maryland inquiry see John Chamberlain, "Our Jobless Youth: A Warning," in *Democracy's Challenge to Education*, p. 39 ff.

As I said, I am far from blaming the young people of Maryland for their attitudes. These attitudes result from a large number of political, social, and economic factors for which other people, if any, are to blame — not the boys and girls of Maryland. But if here we ask ourselves to what extent the public school has to be regarded as one of these factors we cannot completely exculpate the school. Something is wrong not only with politicians and business men and trade union leaders, but also with us educators, however much we may be right in referring to our dependency upon greater powers in life.

Among all the problems of curriculum, methods, statistics, and testing, it has been too much forgotten (not only by the teachers, but also by parents and school politicians, frequently above the protests of the teachers) that the school must be the place for character education. And it does not make any difference whether a school is less or more "child centered," whether it is in a poor or in a favored district, whether it is public or private. In any of these schools the children must, first of all, be enabled to combine their natural psychic and physical growth with the greatest possible portion of energy in solving challenging and stimulating tasks. There must be a certain joy in overcoming obstacles, otherwise all talk about citizenship, learning by doing, individual self-expression, and character education, is empty. For without training in overcoming difficulties there can be no good citizenship, no real learning nor real character growth. And there is no doubt that the social situation of the American high school, in which children of most different qualities had suddenly to be schooled by one and the same procedure, tended to direct the teacher

toward more or less continual compromising. To what extent misunderstood modern educational and psychological theories, such as Dewey's emphasis on the close relationship between duty and interest,<sup>4</sup> have increased this tendency toward not expecting much of children is difficult to say. It has certainly been the case in some so-called progressive schools. But as to the percolation of modernistic schemes into the typical public school of American Middletown one ought not to have any illusions, either in the positive or in the negative sense. Nevertheless, two modern devices have found their entrance into the popular school system; one is testing, the other is guidance. Neither would have done so if it had not shown obvious merits. But as with all devices applied by human beings to human beings, their result depends on the wisdom used in their application. And there are dangers in the use of tests as there are dangers in the application of guidance.

If tests in too rapid succession are interspersed into teaching, then the educational process is in danger of degenerating into a quantitatively measured, merely informational, testable procedure. The pupil goes from one step of instruction to the next, and so on; and often he thinks of the knowledge acquired as something dispensable the moment the test has been administered.

If guidance, instead of helping the student to find the most adequate field for the development of his abilities, works as a device for leading him in the easiest way through high school, then it only promotes the influx of unfitted applicants for white-collar jobs, which is a dan-

<sup>4</sup> John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, first edition, 1916), pp. 407-410.

ger for all modern nations; and many conversations with teachers have convinced me that guidance frequently works in this direction. It does so partly because the American high schools have generally adopted the so-called credit system. This system, attempting to allow for individual differences, permits the student to split his education into little pieces and to choose according to the principle of least resistance. In addition, in many communities an unfortunate relationship between the schools and the parents has developed. Teachers and principals are afraid of the trouble they will have with parents who storm their telephones and offices and complain that their boys or girls are barred from the more fashionable courses. The less fathers and mothers understand the education of their children as a highly complex responsibility, the more they think that in their capacity as taxpayers and members of a democracy with the ideal of equality they have the right to see their children arriving at any goal the family wishes. This is the reverse side of one of the greatest blessings of American school life, namely, the participation of the community and its adults in the management of schools. But schools, though they have to coöperate with adults, must nevertheless set inherent and objective standards of quality; and such standards must not be changed according to the wishes of individual parents. Otherwise equality and democracy destroy their own prerequisite, namely, justice in selection.

All these circumstances become nowadays increasingly important because of the general prolongation of formal education up to the age of eighteen. This prolongation means that many young people, who before 1900 would

have learned self-reliance and responsibility in the practical tasks of life, feel themselves sheltered in institutions where they are taken care of whatever they may do. But this protective character of the school is favorable only for those adolescents who pay for it through exercising their own powers for better service to themselves and to society. If the student prepares himself diligently for positions in which a high degree of knowledge and intellectual qualities is necessary, then society has the obligation to protect him from outside competition in order to enable him to mature sufficiently. But if there is no maturing through intensive work in school, then nothing is being done except delaying decisions. The result is loss of time which ought to have been used in a way more productive for both the adolescent and the community.

Furthermore, this great objective of the school, to develop in its pupils initiative and ethical character, is lost sight of. For these students, held back from a natural exercise of their capacities in the situations of practical life, are neither happy nor encouraged. On the contrary they become disheartened, for they do not feel themselves useful and living up to what they expect from themselves and what other people may expect from them. So, not seldom, feelings of passiveness and discouragement develop before life really begins. Modern psychologists and educators have clearly pointed out the danger of discouragement; many of them, however, do not see that one cannot develop courage and self-confidence in young people by the simple device of protecting them from all possibilities of discouragement. Removing challenge from life, with its inherent risk, is only a negative way when young people are old enough to grow through challenge;

that is, in adolescence. I hope it is not necessary to say that in expressing this opinion we are not recommending child labor and the subjection of youth to forms of competition unfavorable to their growth and happiness. The only point we want to emphasize is the one we have already brought out — that merely mechanical prolongation of school age does not do the job.

Our considerations about the development of ethical character as one of the primary goals of education lead up to another problem which is of fundamental importance for the survival of a society in critical situations. Much as a society needs cool thinking and the power of critical analysis, it also needs faith. Nations without faith are dying nations, just as are nations without reason. Here the great problem of the relation between reason and faith emerges, not only as an abstract philosophical issue but as one of highest practical and historical significance. But we have no time to dwell on this tempting theme. Only one point may be mentioned. Faith in a person comes from two sources: the first we have already mentioned; namely, exercise of one's power in a stimulating environment — not just from living in any environment without a possibility of motivating and challenging experiences. The other kind of faith develops in a vertical direction, namely, from man's experience of his connectedness with life-spending and consoling energies. We may call this experience religious.

These two kinds of faith are often combined. Religious groups such as the Puritans, the Quakers, and in more recent times the Mormons, drew on a remarkable combination of religious faith and practical courage which resulted in unusual accomplishments. The typical so-

ciological explanation for the practical success of certain forms of Calvinism, which comes from Max Weber, must be complemented by reference to the psychological aspect just advanced.

On the other hand, we find that faith in one's future, in the sense of active self-reliance acquired by successful meeting of life problems, is often separated from faith in the religious sense of the word. Then the vertical connection of man to the universe has been forgotten. This is not infrequent in societies with unusual external success, such as those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The richest men are those who receive their vitality from both external success and internal religious reservoirs. But what happens if external success disappears and the religious sources of strength in men have been depleted? Have we then not the poorest man? What can all those sublime concepts of freedom, human dignity, and democracy, so dear to those who can experience them in a courageous and active life, mean to such a man? In addition, from where does even the courageous man, the happy doer, receive direction for his action in periods of conflict?

Here is the question: Are our current philosophies of life, society, and education sufficiently aware of these most urgent philosophical and psychological problems in our modern society, or is there not complete bewilderment as to these elements? Have we not, on the one hand, educational institutions where frightening the children with the devil and hell fire is mistaken for religious education, and on the other hand a great majority of schools where there is complete indifference in respect to

the religious resources of man? And where is there room for the tolerant, open-minded, and nevertheless courageous religiousness which is so deeply connected with the American dream?

We do not advocate an artificial reintroduction of religious instruction in our school system. As our religious life and our society are today, religious instruction of the kind we probably would produce might contribute more to disintegration than to integration. It may be due to the very lack of this kind of religious instruction, as being practiced in many other countries, that this country has still preserved some balance between modern industrial and scientific development on the one hand and religious traditions on the other. But nevertheless we cannot continually draw on tradition without renewing its vital elements. We must want an education which combines the critical and experimental spirit, so necessary for modern democratic life, with the possibility of conveying to children susceptible to these values some idea about the transcendent character of human existence. Only so can we make the future generation as full of faith and capable of construction and resistance as it must be in order to stand the difficult tests of the next decades. And this is possible even without obligatory religious lessons if religious agencies develop a closer relationship to education, and if the school itself in every part of its instruction shows the student that deep thinking about man and nature leads beyond the immediate and tangible spheres into deeper dimensions of being. Then schools may help to restore this kind of initiative and ethical character which are so requisite to the development of full and energetic personalities.



## III

We are now sufficiently advanced in the presentation of some essential principles of education to venture a few suggestions as to problems of curriculum which we raised but left unanswered in the beginning of this essay.

America finds herself in a precarious situation. She has the unique advantage of a unilateral school system which certainly gives the youth and the parents of this country the feeling of a great democratic unity. This feeling must be preserved by all means. On the other hand the "single-track system" makes it more difficult for America than for other countries to develop units of teaching where groups of students of equal abilities and interests can be separately, systematically, and energetically trained for using their best potentialities. Such an attempt involves much more than just a random selection of courses which seem to be suited to this or that child. It involves construction of a curriculum which incorporates the student into a steady and rounded process of learning. The different subjects have to be so interrelated that they support each other and provide a methodical approach to a unity of cultural and scientific problems. Only such an approach contains the degree of consistency and challenge which we considered necessary for the development of initiative and character through learning.

What can be done in order to combine this objective, characteristic of good European school systems, with preservation of the democratic tradition of which America is rightly proud? The answer is: Build up a common

stock of experience in which community of education is possible without harm to individual quality, and from this common basis branch out into more diverse sections of learning which can be successfully cultivated only in homogeneous groups.

Intellect and intelligence divide. They are individualistic. But fortunately men, and particularly children, develop a spirit of community when their emotions and practical abilities are appealed to. They can coöperate in a choir and an orchestra. They can go out to chop wood and build a house and, though one person does it better than the other, the work itself has something human and uniting. We cannot think and talk about thinking among people of too diverse intellectual abilities without splitting the unity of the group. Really deep thinking is, anyhow, a lonely affair. Therefore, we cannot make a festival where everybody takes part joyfully in discussing philosophical problems. But we can have people sing and act and march. In earlier times, pageants and religious processions served partly as an outlet, and partly as a means for cultivating emotions. Today we specialize mainly on boxing matches and the parades of war.

Here is a great field for a thorough reform of our modern curriculum. It must keep youth together through common forms of education in the more basic and emotional activities of man, where collective work does not produce retardation or bad feelings of superiority and inferiority. And it must have youth do its primarily intellectual work more individually within homogeneous groups. It goes without saying that in special cases of serious change of interest and capability possibilities of

transition from one division to another must be provided for.

The common field would consist of training in craftsmanship through common shop work, of garden work and agriculture, of sport — not so much in forms of competition as in forms of team work — and of art. But in speaking of art I do not mean the typical “appreciation” courses, which very often are nothing but a semi-intellectual talking around a subject most inadequate for such activities, namely music or painting; but I conceive of art as doing: choir singing, playing in orchestras, painting, modeling, and beginning of architectural creations. Of course the illusion has to be avoided that every child modeling something that looks like an animal is a potential artist. But on the other hand, every normal child will enjoy doing something with his hands and seeing that he can make something. And every child can develop a sense for the excellence which lies in any thoroughly done piece of work, for manual work shows its results in a more tangible way than the more abstract results of merely intellectual endeavors. In all these “common” fields, as we said, all pupils of the school ought to meet in order to provide these feelings of coöperation and social equality which are necessary in a democracy. Then the intellectual highbrows will see that there are many things in life where their less sophisticated fellows can be just as successful, or even more so, than they are. Nevertheless, nobody will be offended through seeing his neighbor’s success if only the teacher finds the right tone and inculcates the right spirit into his little community.

If these courses, which ought to take about one-third of the curriculum, are well managed, the children will

feel themselves in a great family of learners; and the split of the community will not be complete if for the other part of their time they are allotted to different intellectual fields with diverse contents. The future professional man will go into a division where rigid intellectual standards prevail; the future business man, clerk, or salesman will find a field for the development of his capacities in the commercial section, and the future workman or artisan in his vocational department.

Now several objections will be raised: one, that in contrast to my emphasis on broad human training I come very close to vocationalization of training. Here I have the following reply: First of all, this diversity in unity which I am recommending will not begin before the seventh year of schooling, which in many American cities is when the junior high school begins. Secondly, I do not recommend that in the commercial or vocational courses nothing but practical subjects are to be taught. On the contrary, here also English literature, history, and social sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences have to be dealt with, and if a student wishes he can also learn foreign languages. But each of these subjects will be related to the main objectives of the division. For the curriculum of all divisions will not consist of a mere conglomerate of subjects, but will represent a system of interacting experiences, with the center of gravity lying in the preparation for either professional work, commerce, or craftsmanship. Consequently, the English in the college-preparatory course will be different from the English in the commercial or in the vocational course, though in each division the cultural values of the mother tongue and its literature will be emphasized in right pro-

portion. Even in the commercial or the vocational sections, the introduction of the future practical man into the values of his language will not be confused with an exclusive training in business or technical English. Some of Shakespeare's plays can probably be read in each section, but some of his sonnets, or poems of men such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, or Browning, only in the college-preparatory course.

The second objection will be that the manual and emotional part of the curriculum will take too much time away from the proper subjects of the college-preparatory and of the business course. To this objection my answer is the following: Teachers working with homogeneously grouped children can demand much more, and will find a much more effective response, than teachers in the rather unselected courses of the customary school systems. In addition, in their manual work, in art, and in sport, the students will find not only a chance for recreation, but a chance for the rounding out of their personalities in many respects. There are also many possibilities for using manual work or art for intellectual stimulation, for the intellect is not something isolated from, but dependent on, the growth of the total person. As a matter of fact the value of manual activities, even for the education of the gentleman, has been strongly emphasized by older educators since the Renaissance. Hence we would only revive one of the many old truths which we have neglected in our enlightened era. In addition, will not everybody profit from taking part in musical and art education, and could it not be of great help to the future chemist, physician, or physicist if his hands were trained to construct a simple apparatus? Even the theologian or

philosopher may enjoy using a hammer and axe to repair some broken post of his own fence. And what young intellectual is completely sure today that he may not be forced to earn his living by his hands, or that the nation may not call him to physical service?

The third, though less important, objection would be that in the manual parts of the common work, the students of the vocational section would excel the students of the other sections. For the vocational section naturally contains many things in its proper frame which the other students get only in the common field. This statement may be true. But I do not see any disadvantage in it, for if the boys of the vocational department are the leaders in certain school activities it will be of greatest social value for all participants. It will remove feelings of inferiority in some groups and promote a feeling of equality and respect for their fellow students in other groups. And if common participation at manual efforts and skill should lead to another concept of work in our society, it would be a reward worthy of our most ardent endeavor.

#### IV

It may seem to some as if my proposals were of a rather Utopian character. As a matter of fact they contain nothing that could not be defended with reference to the ideas of our greatest educators from Plato up to our present time. There already exist schools in which most of what I say has been put into practice. But even if my suggestions are still Utopian to a large degree, I do not feel in bad company. Many men to whom I would not dare to compare myself have written Utopias and many of their ideas have seeped down into our daily

life. When Comenius laid the basis for the modern concept of education, and Pestalozzi the groundwork for the elementary school of the nineteenth century, they also were called Utopians. The difference is whether somebody indulges in useless phantasies and presents the products of his day-dreaming, or whether he presents ideas which, though difficult of realization, could be materialized if people only concentrated their efforts toward them.

Of course, this scheme needs investment of money in schools. And I do not dare think that individual communities would be willing to make such investment for such change. It needs help and great initiative on the part of the Federal Government. Here people will cry that the Federal Government would then conquer a new area so far relatively free from its grip. But is it not possible for the Federal Government (or state governments) to give communities money for the reconstruction of their schools without destroying the desirable aspects of community initiative? Why, if the spending of money involves control, could this control not be executed by a board of experts set apart from government and party influences? Is the danger not great that without some far-ranged action our educational system will fail to combine democratic equality with initiative and differentiation, and consequently fail to help democracy to survive? In all questions of intervention of government the final political effect on democracy depends on what kind of government coöperates with what kind of population. If the population has democratic courage and initiative, if it possesses a high esteem for every kind of honest work, whether manual or intellectual, and the right spirit of

coöperation, government intervention will remain within its proper limits. If these qualities die out, then governmental action will have to fill up the gap arising from the contrast between the needs and challenge of the times on the one hand and the indifference of the nation on the other. And then an army of officials will have to do what the free citizen ought to consider his own responsibility; more and more people will get accustomed to wait for help from above instead of helping themselves and each other; and all those conditions will emerge in which democracy degenerates and dictatorial collectivism replaces individual coöperation.

## v

Fortunately there are signs that this nation is beginning to prepare itself for evolutionary reform in order to avoid cataclysmic changes. In the field of social education, without any claim for completeness, three developments ought to be mentioned: the National Youth Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Work Camp Movement. It is difficult for me, and probably for everybody, to pass any objective judgment on these institutions. The National Youth Administration does not indulge in a mere relief concept of education but follows constructive and long-range plans. Some of the practical proposals I have been advancing in this article can be found described in not unsimilar form in the Inglis Lecture on *Work, Wages, and Education*,<sup>5</sup> by Aubrey W. Williams, the Administrator of the NYA. His ideas go further than my own hopes concerning the possibility of connecting manual work in schools with wages, though

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940.



I fully subscribe to his statement that on a certain age level the student wants to know that his practical work has some use, not only for him but for society. To what extent Mr. Williams would agree with my philosophical considerations and my total concept of the curriculum, I do not know. I have some confidence that in spite of possible deviations in detail he would regard my ideas not as opposed to, but as supporting, his concepts of educational responsibility for the youth of this country.

Concerning the CCC movement, many people who have studied it thoroughly do not yet know to what extent it will be able to develop its enormous possibilities for reformed concepts of youth education. In other words, the future will show whether we have to write on the gates of the CCC Camps: "Just another parking place for unemployed youth," or "New school for constructive adult education."

If the leaders of the CCC movement have the ambition to deserve the latter label, they will do well to observe and support with sympathy the Work Camp Movement, as described in Richard Gothe's *Introduction to Work Camps*. The great advantage of this movement is its voluntary character, its possibility of mixing youths of different social strata, and its combination of work and education; to say it briefly: its genuinely democratic character.

The great difficulty is that for all the institutions just mentioned we have not yet the right teachers and leaders. It is easier to get a well-prepared teacher for languages and mathematics than men and women well prepared for the new forms of education of which I am thinking. Here are great fields for colleges, quite a few of which are look-

ing for new schemes in order to prove the necessity of their existence and to attract public attention and support. But first of all: Let us not select the teachers in the new camps by means of tests and examinations; but let us have them chosen by persons with both knowledge of the spirit prerequisite to the success of a new and great socio-educational movement and a fine feeling for the character values in the persons they have to judge.

After all, let us constantly keep in mind that the power of a society to reform itself never grew out of institutions but out of inner determination resulting from initiative, character, and faith. It is to attract attention to the necessity of combining these factors in a sound national education that this essay has been written. It must not be said in the future that the American schools of the first decades of the twentieth century, from the elementary grades up to college, were unable to preserve and foster the pioneer spirit of the United States, that they failed to see the conditions of its continual revitalization and, consequently, contributed unconsciously to its decay. This article leaves many important problems unresolved and even untouched, but to go into the details would mean to write a book. I will be satisfied if these pages contribute to the scope and intensity of a discussion already current and of greatest importance for the moral and economic welfare of the future generation.

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## X

# INDIVIDUALISM AND THE FUTURE

*Fritz Morstein Marx*

IT IS ten years now since "the crash." Ten years, each touched by the dark wings of despair; each marred by the spectacle of millions of men and women, young and old, joined in the gloomy pilgrimage for work; each overshadowed by the uncertainties of an economic regime that many have ceased to regard as an "order." A new generation is rising, deeply conscious of the discrepancy between social realities and the promise of the "American way." This is the generation to which will fall the decision over the continuation of the democratic experiment.

To be sure, the decision will not take the form of a plebiscite. The issue cannot be expected to present itself in terms of clear-cut alternatives. It will rather involve the inconspicuous precedence of one tendency over another. And the eventual outcome is likely to appear closely correlated with widely recognized economic necessities. But economic necessity does not gain shape independent of popular thinking. Nor is it unaffected by psychological factors. A necessity acquires its coercive quality by mass acknowledgment. Its existence is conditioned on a state of mind. It is acted upon as the result of widespread inclinations. Its propaganda power derives from the general orientation of public opinion.

In the battles of competing ideologies, youth has always been in the vanguard. It has pitted its enthusiasm and its optimism against the skepticism of age. It has been ablaze with that fervor for reformation in body and soul which its elders have been prone to declare unattainable. What is going to happen to American democracy if an entire generation of new citizens withdraws into pessimistic brooding in an era as crucial as ours? In an era that is witnessing the integration of totalitarian systems into one single type — distinct as such, although employing different national emblems, and doubly challenging by its unity? In an era that from its own social maladjustments is generating the forces destructive to democratic life?

There are those who lay the earlier triumphs of democracy to favorable economic conditions, the conditions prevalent during the expansionist phase of industrialization. They have no hope for survival in the impending test of a more static industrial order faced with the limited option of holding labor in its place or translating competitive enterprise into a centrally controlled service institution. Their case, viewed in broader perspective, does not lack substantiation. But it is by no means waterproof. Perhaps its greatest weakness lies in the cogent simplicity of argumentation. We cannot go here into its merits and demerits. We must confine ourselves to the observation that man's history testifies to his genius for temporizing, workable inconsistencies, pragmatic compromise, and slow-footed transition. This genius may exasperate the social engineer. We prefer to look upon it more sympathetically. No amount of sympathy, however, will prevent the sands of time from running out.

There are also those whose prescription for American democracy is to invoke the spirit of self-reliance by resort to time-honored slogans. It is through "rugged individualism" that we are to conquer the threshold of a brighter future. This is not exactly the terminology of the Founding Fathers, but in it is alive an undertone of Jeffersonianism, even of Locke's theses, embellished further by the plain humanity of the frontier and the continental surge that in the seventies and eighties made our country the "land of opportunity." What is the place of such slogans in contemporary America? What is their appeal to youth? Can we rely on "rugged individualism" in the defense of democracy? These are the questions to guide our reconsideration.

## I

So much may be said at the start: society is inconceivable unless it incorporates into itself certain elements of collectivism. Man as the social animal is never absolutely free. His freedom is essentially conditioned on the prevailing mode of group existence. The recognition of common purposes implies an axiomatic precedence of the common interest over the individual interest. Up to this point, we have parted company merely with the anarchist. For each proposition we could even cite the authority of the Supreme Court. Legitimate controversy does not begin until the next fork in the road is reached. It poses a problem of delimitation — how far does the common interest extend?

The totalitarian solution is both brutally simple and shamelessly shrewd. It shuns all binding formulation, leaving the definition of the common interest to the unchecked choice of the political control group, covered by

the façade of personal leadership. As a consequence, the individual sphere as an identifiable area of private activity is denied on principle. The incidence of political decision itself certifies the public interest. Yet neither Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany nor Soviet Russia have lost sight of the need for individual initiative in the attainment of the totalitarian Utopia. Even collectivism operates through man, and man must be cheered. It is not through oversight on the part of Mussolini that the "bill of rights" attached to the *Statuto* of 1848 has never been formally abrogated. It is not simply a contradiction that in the Third Reich the "personal status of the German" has become a subject of cautious debate. Nor is it surprising that, before the adoption of the new constitution as well as after, Soviet spokesmen have eulogized individual worth in passages as lyrical as these:

Immediately after it had freed itself from the shackles of capitalist profit interests, "the grey mass" not only triumphed over all difficulties and built up a new social order, but it developed itself from a mass of miserable, hungry and oppressed slaves of capitalism into 170 million masters of life. The proletarian revolution has released the individuality of the working human being, an individuality which brooks no obstacles and fears no difficulties, and out of the ranks of the masses splendid personalities are produced day after day, men and women like Stakhanov (the miner) and Vinogradova (the textile worker) who demonstrate to the world what a people can do when once it has flung off the yoke of capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, under "socialist competition," the proletarian dictatorship has reenacted capitalist features such as wage differentials and bonuses in order to cultivate the incen-

<sup>1</sup> L. F. Boross, *International Press Correspondence*, vol. xv, no. 58 (1935), p. 1441.

tive toward self-exertion in the service of the collective economy. For the same reason, the Fascist and National Socialist regimes are retaining the managerial responsibility of the entrepreneur, enlarged in fact by the growing impositions of a political character.<sup>2</sup> While society itself tends to accentuate communality, it is no less true that even its most concrete expression, the organized polity, must pay homage for the sake of self-preservation to the human factor and its physical basis, the individual with his desires and exasperations.

Totalitarianism, although submerging the individual in "the people," resuscitates him as the citizen resplendent with the glory and achievement of the "Soviet Fatherland," German *Volkstum*, or Fascist State. The theoretical reconciliation of personality values and community needs is excessively weighted toward the latter, but it is not devoid of popular rationalization for home consumption, as the record shows. Democracy seeks a true balance between the two, entrusting government with the task of providing the social framework within which alone political equality can unfold its practical significance. Individualism leans in the direction of the other extreme. It reverses the argument of totalitarianism by identifying the "good society" with man's creative instinct stimulated by the competitive pursuit of his enlightened self-interest.

<sup>2</sup> For an able exposition of the Fascist point of view, see F. Carli, "Il Sistema Corporativo come Sistema di Razionalizzazione," Seventh International Management Congress, Washington, 1938, *General Management Papers*, pp. 12 ff. The official German version is outlined concisely in the discussion remarks of Direktor Georg Seebauer, *Proceedings*, pp. 269-270. Both résumés are striking also for what they leave unmentioned.

The religious affiliations of individualism have often been traced. From the contemporary vantage point, we have reason to lay greater stress on another aspect. At bottom, individualism presupposes a permanence of constructive effort in which all have the same potential share. Hence one of the essential premises is the fundamental parity of social status and individual opportunity. The agrarian order which is reflected in Jefferson's thought approximated this ideal through farm ownership. Frontier society held out a similar promise by exposing everyone to like hazards. Where such conditions do not exist, individualism inevitably reduces itself *ad absurdum*. The late Ogden Mills was not blind to the conclusion; it inspired his demand for a "proprietary society" based upon widest distribution of small holdings. "Rugged individualism" is therefore an ideal impossible of realization by youth as society is now organized. Youth should regard it as nothing more than a relic of the "horse and buggy" era — interesting historically, but as outmoded as the horse when it comes to advocating its widespread adoption.

Between the heyday of the frontier and Ogden Mills there is a vast historical cleavage. The intervening decades saw the rise of economic empires, the emergence of an industrial proletariat, and the beginning of the disintegration of independent farming. It was a breathless period, which breathlessly seized the small-people individualism of earlier days to make it into a big-people fetish, gorgeously decked with fresh flowers. Of these, the orchids were imported from Britain. The florist was a gentleman whose *chef-d'œuvre* made the rounds so fast as to provide Oliver Wendell Holmes with ample cause



for reminding his colleagues on the Supreme Court that it was not their business to "enact Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*."

Spencer had the personal distinction of combining in his career all those traits that marked him as the chosen spokesman of his cause. He was a "self-made man," successful and articulate, even brilliant in his writings. He had finished his training as an engineer at seventeen, and was still a young man when he found himself installed as the editor of the *Economist*. His subsequent *Autobiography* ran to three volumes, and it was by no means merely space filled in. It is true that in England he was distinctly behind the times. Not so on this side of the Atlantic.

To him, progress was closely associated with industrial leadership. Such leadership would require a free hand, even to the point of "ignoring" the State and leaving "the lower classes" to themselves, at least for the immediate future. Government interference was vicious, for it was bound to impede social advance. As he put it in his later *Man versus the State*:

Regulations have been made in yearly-growing numbers, restraining the citizen in directions where his actions were previously unchecked, and compelling actions which previously he might perform or not as he liked; and at the same time heavier public burdens, chiefly local, have further restricted his freedom, by lessening that portion of his earnings which he can spend as he pleases, and augmenting the portion taken from him to be spent as public agents please.

But was it not by popular preference that these regulations were written into the law? Spencer was ready to concede the obvious — without foregoing his right to re-

buttal. Parliaments could not be permitted to do what kings had been prevented from doing. To preserve sanity, he argued, a limit must be put on the power of representative assemblies. "In the absence of an agreement, the supremacy of a majority over a minority does not exist at all." The decisive question is "whether the lives of citizens are more interfered with than they were; not the nature of the agency which interferes with them." In short, government is "begotten of aggression and by aggression." With minor changes of style, this intellectual climax would seem to anticipate Lenin.

Yet, in the United States, Herbert Spencer's doctrine found a fertile soil. He supplied a badly needed formula to naturalize an economic transformation that was truly revolutionary. The ascendancy of corporate enterprise, aided and abetted by an all-too-willing Supreme Court, appeared to provide 1787 with a belated victory over 1829. Universal suffrage had ushered in a new mass democracy. Individualism was called upon to check the dangerous *demos*. John Marshall had resorted to judicial review to meet a temporary political exigency caused by the repudiation of the Federalists. After the Civil War, judicial review becomes an integral part of the legislative process.

Against the political password of Spencerism, Kant's philosophical individualism of autonomous human duty and Wilhelm von Humboldt's rural preoccupations were apt to look academic and pedestrian, if not simply outmoded. American public opinion was pointedly cold to the question of Spencer's pedigree. Far more important was it that he had found words for an era which yearned for sympathetic interpretation, an era haunted by the

choked outcry of its victims. Spencer's timeliness, however, was to turn itself against him. Individualism as the *rationale* of government passivity assumed the emergence of social harmony to be secured either by a "spontaneous plebiscite of prices" or by universal observance of a common conception of enterprise morality. Both failed to materialize. In the hectic rush of industrialization, the State, thwarted by inadequate instrumentalities of control, was falling back; it was thus unable to present a yardstick for measuring the efficiency of the individualist formula. Still, even without such a yardstick, the practical limits of Spencer's postulates were soon to become painfully obvious. He had suggestively rationalized one single phase in the evolution of the modern economy. The subsequent phase made him obsolete.

In Spencer's native England, no less a figure than John Stuart Mill drew the logical conclusion. Wrote he in his *Principles of Political Economy*:

It is the proper end of government to reduce this wretched waste to the smallest possible amount, by taking such measures as shall cause the energies now spent by mankind in injuring one another, or in protecting themselves against injury, to be turned to the legitimate employment of the human faculties, that of compelling the powers of nature to be more and more subservient to physical and moral good.

And again in Mill's *Autobiography*, published in 1873, we find:

While we repudiated with the greatest energy that tyranny of society over the individual which most Socialistic Systems are supposed to involve, we yet looked forward to a time when society will no longer be divided into the idle (the hereditary rich) and the industrious; when the rule that

they who do not work shall not eat, will be applied not to the paupers only, but impartially to all; when the division of the produce of labor, instead of depending, as in so great a degree it now does, on the accident of birth, will be made by concert on an acknowledged principle of justice; and when it will no longer either be, or be thought to be, impossible for human beings to exert themselves strenuously in procuring benefits which are not to be exclusively their own, but to be shared with the society they belong to. The social problem of the future we considered to be, how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action with a common ownership in the raw materials of the globe, and an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labour.

## II

From Mill's comment, we may derive two inferences. The first is that the convenient contrast between individualism and socialism is something of a fake. It is rather the concrete character of the one and the other on which we have to fasten our attention. The second, that the widely maintained dichotomy of liberty and security is unreal. And Mill's mature reflection, after all, is doubly significant, since in him we salute the author of the celebrated essay *On Liberty*. For another inference we can turn to Herbert Spencer. It is this: that *his* individualism, once deprived of its trappings, represents the direct antithesis of democracy. Fortunately, Spencer's world is no longer. The change of mood has produced a change of style. We can hardly find a more impressive testimonial than the editorial language of the *London Times*:

The transition from an individualist to a coördinated economy is not the only task which confronts modern democratic statesmanship. . . . Yet in truth difficulties arise only because the remnants of the *laissez-faire* tradition still hang

about the conception of liberty. To be free, as nineteenth-century thought saw it, was to be released from the shackles of obsolete authority. To be free, as twentieth-century thought is beginning to see it, is so to organize that the gains of freedom shall not be precarious but shall be wrought into the very texture of a people's life.<sup>3</sup>

Does this mean government "paternalism" that reduces the individual to the inactive object of public care? Surely not, as long as the organization of human energies aims at more than organization. Surely not, as long as democracy remains animated by a sense of social achievement. Surely not, as long as the representative system is determined to seek its basic standard in the durable welfare of its broadest class. The freedom of the twentieth century, which is the freedom to be enjoyed by our youth, must find its primary guaranty in the mutuality of genuine coöperation, a coöperation that requires individual endorsement and thus assigns an expanding field to man's creative instinct and initiative.

There is in fact no feasible alternative. Totalitarianism substitutes coercion for coöperation. The coercion, true enough, does not emanate from sheer physical force, although resort to organized violence is far more frequent and far more methodical than elsewhere. But the coercion is no less compelling because it relies so largely on persuasion, on propaganda techniques, on the comprehensive direction of men's minds — particularly of youth's minds, which, as Hitler has said, are "still plastic." Government by propaganda minimizes the necessity for gov-

<sup>3</sup> February 24, 1937. The editorial, it should be mentioned, was inspired by three articles by Sir William Beveridge on "The Home Front in War," the last of which appeared in the same issue.

ernment by terror. Both present their justification in terms of the divine supremacy of leadership. The Leader "knows the way." As a Nazi official has said, "German youth follows Hitler. They know what he thinks is best." For the followers, it is the conclusion of wisdom as well as the consummation of loyalty—to follow. *Duce, Führer*, "the great teacher and leader of all the peoples of the USSR, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin": these appellations dramatize the essence of totalitarian order, the deference, not of the Many to the Few, but of All to the One.

Patently, the modern one-party systems leave no room for freedom as we have come to understand it. Their ideologies, as secular religions, controvert the idea of liberty itself. There can be no freedom from faith, for faith is absolute. What, however, is the relationship between liberty and the individualism of Herbert Spencer? Here freedom is perverted into the immunity of the strong from any defined obligation of respect for the human integrity of the weak. For us, the implications are as unacceptable as the religious pretenses of totalitarian regimes. In John Dickinson's words, "The liberty which our Anglo-Saxon ancestors have fought to maintain for fifty generations has been liberty under law, and law means regulation."

The revivalist preoccupation with "rugged individualism" not only discloses an unwillingness to redeem the promise of democracy. It is also distinctly anachronistic. Ever since the adoption of the first factory-inspection laws, we have progressed step by step in the direction of standardizing (and hence generalizing) the individual's option within the bounds of community. The social

contract which occupied so prominent a place at the eve of the new society has thereby gained increasing practical importance. Today, Ortega y Gasset's "mass man" is the sustaining foundation of our political order. The march of social security is the product not so much of humanitarian supererogation as of inescapable necessity.

Here, too, the precedent is not obscure. There was a time when government regulation of private enterprise could be denounced widely as destructive interference. The move we made in establishing the Interstate Commerce Commission was looked upon as a vicious attack upon the sanctity of responsible management. The clouds of narrow-minded controversy were soon to be dispelled. Subsequent decades beheld the spectacle of those regulated rushing to the defense of the regulator whenever the organizational independence of the Interstate Commerce Commission seemed to be in danger. A paradox? By no means, if we are to scrutinize the actual effect of regulation. By exercising its lawful powers, the Interstate Commerce Commission contributed to the interplay of competitive forces the security of specific criteria of legitimate conduct. It thus minimized the hazards of investment and managerial decision. It provided an economic safety which the "open market" could not accord either the railroads or the shippers. It interposed its *expertise* between political and profit pressures, holding the shielding sign of authority over its clientele without sacrificing the public interest.

The example could not fail to crystallize into a formula. We are not unaware of its actual imperfections, but the widespread application of the formula is fraught with relevance for our theme. Mass democracy must

recognize in government the medium of social reconciliation and corrective provision for human opportunities. Such mediation cannot be declared a failure on the ground that it is neither automatic nor capable of absolute justice. Mediation by government policy is a continuing process, predicated on circumstance and alive to immediate needs. Its effectiveness should not be measured against an ultimate equity. It is more important to insure the continuity of the evolution by our consciousness of motion. Shortsighted impatience may jeopardize the development. The recurrent drive for speed is ill-inspired. Decisive is the direction. In the past, examined over a longer period, the direction has not changed.

Government as the medium of social adjustment must remain a pious wish unless public policy is both accountable and based on competent analysis. In the era of the Service State, the administrative organization of the polity has acquired a novel prominence. Freedom cannot be "wrought into the very texture of a people's life" without safeguarding at least a minimum of social and economic equality — both of status and concrete opportunity. Is it necessary to say that such safeguards, far from creating dependence, are the only devices by which the individual may be liberated for active citizenship? Is it necessary to stress that man held down by the struggle for existence will despair of political rights? As we contemplate the future — which is, in the final analysis, youth's — the outstanding problem appears to be to infuse social meaning into political rights. The cardinal factor is no longer the isolated individual, conceived as an entity by itself and artificially segregated from all community relationships. It is rather the coöperative individ-



ual, filling his place in an order that he supports by his achievement because it releases, canalizes, and rewards his constructive energies. To provide the appropriate framework for the accommodation of the coöperative individual is the test of contemporary democracy.

Is this a bold vision? If it is, let us remind ourselves that it is shared by many. Today, more than ever before, democratic government can command the resources of the nation. The impact of political decision is registered in every phase of the economy. Dilettantism, bewildered inactivity, and ill-planned action have instant and far-reaching repercussions. The machinery of responsible control is operative only to the same degree that it is carefully designed and sensitive in its processes. The coming era of American democracy will require increased reliance on administrative services and informed legislative judgment.

It is hard to see why the adaptation of our government techniques to contemporary conditions should overtax our strength, as is contended in certain quarters. It is a contention born of the weariness and skepticism of old age rather than the idealism, confidence, and energy of youth. The argument of pessimism and obstruction has its antecedents in this field of government reform — without, however, gaining thereby much authority. When in 1853 Northcote and Trevelyan submitted to British public opinion their famous plea for a government career service, Graham implored Gladstone to lend it only a deaf ear:

It is clear that if this measure be adopted the reign of patronage is at an end. . . . I am not certain that parliamentary government can be conducted on such principles of purity.

. . . It leaves the House of Commons . . . that mighty engine, without its accustomed regulator at the very moment when you are about to increase its powers.

Graham stood not alone in considering patronage "a part, though an ugly part, of the price a free people pay for constitutional liberty." John Stuart Mill, on the other hand, proclaimed the proposed reforms "one of the great public improvements, the adoption of which would form an epoch in history." The future proved Mill right and Graham wrong. It will do the same to our American Grahams.

Democracy, buttressed by political and administrative institutions strong enough to meet the need for a common order and responsive enough to allow for the diversity of human aspirations, is no empty myth. It is the democracy of social coöperation. It is the democracy in which our present-day American youth will eventually participate. It is the democracy of which our youth may very well become the builders.

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THE STRATEGY OF PEACE  
AN APPENDIX



## THE STRATEGY OF PEACE

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### THE MORAL EQUIVALENT OF WAR \*

(1910)

*William James*

THE war against war is going to be no holiday excursion or camping party. The military feelings are too deeply grounded to abdicate their place among our ideals until better substitutes are offered than the glory and shame that come to nations as well as to individuals from the ups and downs of politics and the vicissitudes of trade. There is something highly paradoxical in the modern man's relation to war. Ask all our millions, north and south, whether they would vote now (were such a thing possible) to have our war for the Union expunged from history, and the record of a peaceful transition to the present time substituted for that of its marches and battles, and probably hardly a handful of eccentrics would say yes. Those ancestors, those efforts, those memories and legends, are the most ideal part of what we now own together, a sacred spiritual possession worth more than all the blood poured out. Yet ask those same people whether they would be willing in cold blood to start another civil war now to gain another similar possession, and not one man or woman would vote for the proposition. In modern eyes, precious though wars may be, they must not

\* "The Moral Equivalent of War" was first published in *International Conciliation*, June 1910. It is reprinted here through the courtesy of Mr. Henry James, of New York.

be waged solely for the sake of the ideal harvest. Only when forced upon one, only when an enemy's injustice leaves us no alternative, is a war now thought permissible.

It was not thus in ancient times. The earlier men were hunting men, and to hunt a neighboring tribe, kill the males, loot the village and possess the females, was the most profitable, as well as the most exciting, way of living. Thus were the more martial tribes selected, and in chiefs and peoples a pure pugnacity and love of glory came to mingle with the more fundamental appetite for plunder.

Modern war is so expensive that we feel trade to be a better avenue to plunder; but modern man inherits all the innate pugnacity and all the love of glory of his ancestors. Showing war's irrationality and horror is of no effect upon him. The horrors make the fascination. War is the *strong* life; it is life *in extremis*; war-taxes are the only ones men never hesitate to pay, as the budgets of all nations show us.

History is a bath of blood. The Iliad is one long recital of how Diomedes and Ajax, Sarpedon and Hector *killed*. No detail of the wounds they made is spared us, and the Greek mind fed upon the story. Greek history is a panorama of jingoism and imperialism — war for war's sake, all the citizens being warriors. It is horrible reading, because of the irrationality of it all — save for the purpose of making "history" — and the history is that of the utter ruin of a civilization in intellectual respects perhaps the highest the earth has ever seen.

Those wars were purely piratical. Pride, gold, women, slaves, excitement, were their only motives. In the Peloponnesian war, for example, the Athenians ask the inhabitants of Melos (the island where the "Venus de Milo" was found), hitherto neutral, to own their lordship. The envoys meet, and hold a debate which Thucydides gives in full, and which, for sweet reasonableness of form, would have satisfied

Matthew Arnold. "The powerful exact what they can," said the Athenians, "and the weak grant what they must." When the Meleans say that sooner than be slaves they will appeal to the gods, the Athenians reply: "Of the gods we believe and of men we know that, by a law of their nature, wherever they can rule they will. This law was not made by us, and we are not the first to have acted upon it; we did but inherit it, and we know that you and all mankind, if you were as strong as we are, would do as we do. So much for the gods; we have told you why we expect to stand as high in their good opinion as you." Well, the Meleans still refused, and their town was taken. "The Athenians," Thucydides quietly says, "thereupon put to death all who were of military age and made slaves of the women and children. They then colonized the island, sending thither five hundred settlers of their own."

Alexander's career was piracy pure and simple, nothing but an orgy of power and plunder, made romantic by the character of the hero. There was no rational principle in it, and the moment he died his generals and governors attacked one another. The cruelty of those times is incredible. When Rome finally conquered Greece, Paulus Aemilius was told by the Roman Senate to reward his soldiers for their toil by "giving" them the old kingdom of Epirus. They sacked seventy cities and carried off a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants as slaves. How many they killed I know not; but in Etolia they killed all the senators, five hundred and fifty in number. Brutus was "the noblest Roman of them all," but to reanimate his soldiers on the eve of Philippi he similarly promises to give them the cities of Sparta and Thessalonica to ravage, if they win the fight.

Such was the gory nurse that trained societies to cohesiveness. We inherit the warlike type; and for most of the capacities of heroism that the human race is full of we have to



thank this cruel history. Dead men tell no tales, and if there were any tribes of other type than this they have left no survivors. Our ancestors have bred pugnacity into our bone and marrow, and thousands of years of peace won't breed it out of us. The popular imagination fairly fattens on the thought of wars. Let public opinion once reach a certain fighting pitch, and no ruler can withstand it. In the Boer war both governments began with bluff, but couldn't stay there, the military tension was too much for them. In 1898 our people had read the word WAR in letters three inches high for three months in every newspaper. The pliant politician McKinley was swept away by their eagerness, and our squalid war with Spain became a necessity.

At the present day, civilized opinion is a curious mental mixture. The military instincts and ideals are as strong as ever, but are confronted by reflective criticisms which sorely curb their ancient freedom. Innumerable writers are showing up the bestial side of military service. Pure loot and mastery seem no longer morally avowable motives, and pretexts must be found for attributing them solely to the enemy. England and we, our army and navy authorities repeat without ceasing, arm solely for "peace," Germany and Japan it is who are bent on loot and glory. "Peace" in military mouths today is a synonym for "war expected." The word has become a pure provocative, and no government wishing peace sincerely should allow it ever to be printed in a newspaper. Every up-to-date dictionary should say that "peace" and "war" mean the same thing, now *in posse*, now *in actu*. It may even reasonably be said that the intensely sharp competitive *preparation* for war by the nations is the *real war*, permanent, unceasing; and that the battles are only a sort of public verification of the mastery gained during the "peace"-interval.

It is plain that on this subject civilized man has developed

a sort of double personality. If we take European nations, no legitimate interest of any one of them would seem to justify the tremendous destructions which a war to compass it would necessarily entail. It would seem as though common sense and reason ought to find a way to reach agreement in every conflict of honest interests. I myself think it our bounden duty to believe in such international rationality as possible. But, as things stand, I see how desperately hard it is to bring the peace-party and the war-party together, and I believe that the difficulty is due to certain deficiencies in the program of pacificism which set the militarist imagination strongly, and to a certain extent justifiably, against it. In the whole discussion both sides are on imaginative and sentimental ground. It is but one utopia against another, and everything one says must be abstract and hypothetical. Subject to this criticism and caution, I will try to characterize in abstract strokes the opposite imaginative forces, and point out what to my own very fallible mind seems the best utopian hypothesis, the most promising line of conciliation.

In my remarks, pacifist tho' I am, I will refuse to speak of the bestial side of the war-régime (already done justice to by many writers) and consider only the higher aspects of militaristic sentiment. Patriotism no one thinks discreditable; nor does any one deny that war is the romance of history. But inordinate ambitions are the soul of every patriotism, and the possibility of violent death the soul of all romance. The militarily patriotic and romantic-minded everywhere, and especially the professional military class, refuse to admit for a moment that war may be a transitory phenomenon in social evolution. The notion of a sheep's paradise like that revolts, they say, our higher imagination. Where then would be the steeps of life? If war had ever stopped, we should have to re-invent it, on this view, to redeem life from flat degeneration.

Reflective apologists for war at the present day all take it religiously. It is a sort of sacrament. Its profits are to the vanquished as well as to the victor; and quite apart from any question of profit, it is an absolute good, we are told, for it is human nature at its highest dynamic. Its "horrors" are a cheap price to pay for rescue from the only alternative supposed, of a world of clerks and teachers, of co-education and zoophily, of "consumer's leagues" and "associated charities," of industrialism unlimited, and feminism unabashed. No scorn, no hardness, no valor any more! Fie upon such a cattleyard of a planet!

So far as the central essence of this feeling goes, no healthy-minded person, it seems to me, can help to some degree partaking of it. Militarism is the great preserver of our ideals of hardihood, and human life with no use for hardihood would be contemptible. Without risks or prizes for the darer, history would be insipid indeed; and there is a type of military character which every one feels that the race should never cease to breed, for every one is sensitive to its superiority. The duty is incumbent on mankind, of keeping military characters in stock — of keeping them, if not for use, then as ends in themselves and as pure pieces of perfection, — so that Roosevelt's weaklings and mollicoddles may not end by making everything else disappear from the face of nature.

This natural sort of feeling forms, I think, the innermost soul of army-writings. Without any exception known to me, militarist authors take a highly mystical view of their subject, and regard war as a biological or sociological necessity, uncontrolled by ordinary psychological checks and motives. When the time of development is ripe the war must come, reason or no reason, for the justifications pleaded are invariably fictitious. War is, in short, a permanent human *obligation*. General Homer Lea, in his recent book "the

Valor of Ignorance," plants himself squarely on this ground. Readiness for war is for him the essence of nationality, and ability in it the supreme measure of the health of nations.

Nations, General Lea says, are never stationary — they must necessarily expand or shrink, according to their vitality or decrepitude. Japan now is culminating; and by the fatal law in question it is impossible that her statesmen should not long since have entered, with extraordinary foresight, upon a vast policy of conquest — the game in which the first moves were her wars with China and Russia and her treaty with England, and of which the final objective is the capture of the Philippines, the Hawaiian Islands, Alaska, and the whole of our Coast west of the Sierra Passes. This will give Japan what her ineluctable vocation as a state absolutely forces her to claim, the possession of the entire Pacific Ocean; and to oppose these deep designs we Americans have, according to our author, nothing but our conceit, our ignorance, our commercialism, our corruption, and our feminism. General Lea makes a minute technical comparison of the military strength which we at present could oppose to the strength of Japan, and concludes that the islands, Alaska, Oregon, and Southern California, would fall almost without resistance, that San Francisco must surrender in a fortnight to a Japanese investment, that in three or four months the war would be over, and our republic, unable to regain what it had heedlessly neglected to protect sufficiently, would then "disintegrate," until perhaps some Caesar should arise to weld us again into a nation.

A dismal forecast indeed! Yet not unplausible, if the mentality of Japan's statesmen be of the Caesarian type of which history shows so many examples, and which is all that General Lea seems able to imagine. But there is no reason to think that women can no longer be the mothers of Napoleonic or Alexandrian characters; and if these come in

Japan and find their opportunity, just such surprises as "the Valor of Ignorance" paints may lurk in ambush for us. Ignorant as we still are of the innermost recesses of Japanese mentality, we may be foolhardy to disregard such possibilities.

Other militarists are more complex and more moral in their considerations. The "Philosophie des Krieges," by S. R. Steinmetz is a good example. War, according to this author, is an ordeal instituted by God, who weighs the nations in its balance. It is the essential form of the State, and the only function in which peoples can employ all their powers at once and convergently. No victory is possible save as the resultant of a totality of virtues, no defeat for which some vice or weakness is not responsible. Fidelity, cohesiveness, tenacity, heroism, conscience, education, inventiveness, economy, wealth, physical health and vigor — there isn't a moral or intellectual point of superiority that doesn't tell, when God holds his assizes and hurls the peoples upon one another. *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*; and Dr. Steinmetz does not believe that in the long run chance and luck play any part in apportioning the issues.

The virtues that prevail, it must be noted, are virtues anyhow, superiorities that count in peaceful as well as in military competition; but the strain on them, being infinitely intenser in the latter case, makes war infinitely more searching as a trial. No ordeal is comparable to its winnowings. Its dread hammer is the welder of men into cohesive states, and nowhere but in such states can human nature adequately develop its capacity. The only alternative is "degeneration."

Dr. Steinmetz is a conscientious thinker, and his book, short as it is, takes much into account. Its upshot can, it seems to me, be summed up in Simon Patten's word, that mankind was nursed in pain and fear, and that the transition to a "pleasure-economy" may be fatal to a being wielding

no powers of defense against its disintegrative influences. If we speak of the *fear of emancipation from the fear-regime*, we put the whole situation into a single phrase; fear regarding ourselves now taking the place of the ancient fear of the enemy.

Turn the fear over as I will in my mind, it all seems to lead back to two unwillingnesses of the imagination, one esthetic, and the other moral: unwillingness, first to envisage a future in which army-life, with its many elements of charm, shall be forever impossible, and in which the destinies of peoples shall nevermore be decided quickly, thrillingly, and tragically, by force, but only gradually and insipidly by "evolution"; and, secondly, unwillingness to see the supreme theatre of human strenuousness closed, and the splendid military aptitudes of men doomed to keep always in a state of latency and never show themselves in action. These insistent unwillingnesses, no less than other esthetic and ethical insistentencies have, it seems to me, to be listened to and respected. One cannot meet them effectively by mere counter-insistency on war's expensiveness and horror. The horror makes the thrill; and when the question is of getting the extremest and supremest out of human nature, talk of expense sounds ignominious. The weakness of so much merely negative criticism is evident—pacifism makes no converts from the military party. The military party denies neither the bestiality nor the horror, nor the expense; it only says that these things tell but half the story. It only says that war is *worth* them; that, taking human nature as a whole, its wars are its best protection against its weaker and more cowardly self, and that mankind cannot *afford* to adopt a peace-economy.

Pacifists ought to enter more deeply into the esthetical and ethical point of view of their opponents. Do that first in any controversy, says J. J. Chapman, *then move the point*,

and your opponent will follow. So long as anti-militarists propose no substitute for war's disciplinary function, no *moral equivalent* of war, analogous, as one might say, to the mechanical equivalent of heat, so long they fail to realize the full inwardness of the situation. And as a rule they do fail. The duties, penalties, and sanctions pictured in the utopias they paint are all too weak and tame to touch the military-minded. Tolstoy's pacificism is the only exception to this rule, for it is profoundly pessimistic as regards all this world's values, and makes the fear of the Lord furnish the moral spur provided elsewhere by the fear of the enemy. But our socialistic peace-advocates all believe absolutely in this world's values; and instead of the fear of the Lord and the fear of the enemy, the only fear they reckon with is the fear of poverty if one be lazy. This weakness pervades all the socialistic literature with which I am acquainted. Even in Lowes Dickinson's exquisite dialogue,\* high wages and short hours are the only forces invoked for overcoming man's distaste for repulsive kinds of labor. Meanwhile men at large still live as they always have lived, under a pain-and-fear economy — for those of us who live in an ease-economy are but an island in the stormy ocean — and the whole atmosphere of present-day utopian literature tastes mawkish and dishwatery to people who still keep a sense of life's more bitter flavors. It suggests, in truth, ubiquitous inferiority.

Inferiority is always with us, and merciless scorn of it is the keynote of the military temper. "Dogs, would you live forever?" shouted Frederick the Great. "Yes," say our utopians, "let us live forever, and raise our level gradually." The best thing about our "inferiors" to-day is that they are as tough as nails, and physically and morally almost as insensitive. Utopianism would see them soft and squeamish, while militarism would keep their callousness, but transfigure

\* *Justice and Liberty*, N. Y., 1909.

it into a meritorious characteristic, needed by "the service," and redeemed by that from the suspicion of inferiority. All the qualities of a man acquire dignity when he knows that the service of the collectivity that owns him needs them. If proud of the collectivity, his own pride rises in proportion. No collectivity is like an army for nourishing such pride; but it has to be confessed that the only sentiment which the image of pacific cosmopolitan industrialism is capable of arousing in countless worthy breasts is shame at the idea of belonging to *such* a collectivity. It is obvious that the United States of America as they exist to-day impress a mind like General Lea's as so much human blubber. Where is the sharpness and precipitousness, the contempt for life, whether one's own, or another's? Where is the savage "yes" and "no," the unconditional duty? Where is the conscription? Where is the blood-tax? Where is anything that one feels honored by belonging to?

Having said thus much in preparation, I will now confess my own utopia. I devoutly believe in the reign of peace and in the gradual advent of some sort of a socialistic equilibrium. The fatalistic view of the war-function is to me nonsense, for I know that war-making is due to definite motives and subject to prudential checks and reasonable criticisms, just like any other form of enterprise. And when whole nations are the armies, and the science of destruction vies in intellectual refinement with the sciences of production, I see that war becomes absurd and impossible from its own monstrosity. Extravagant ambitions will have to be replaced by reasonable claims, and nations must make common cause against them. I see no reason why all this should not apply to yellow as well as to white countries, and I look forward to a future when acts of war shall be formally outlawed as between civilized peoples.

All these beliefs of mine put me squarely into the anti-



militarist party. But I do not believe that peace either ought to be or will be permanent on this globe, unless the states pacifically organized preserve some of the old elements of army-discipline. A permanently successful peace-economy cannot be a simple pleasure-economy. In the more or less socialistic future towards which mankind seems drifting we must still subject ourselves collectively to those severities which answer to our real position upon this only partly hospitable globe. We must make new energies and hardihoods continue the manliness to which the military mind so faithfully clings. Martial virtues must be the enduring cement; intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of private interest, obedience to command, must still remain the rock upon which states are built — unless, indeed, we wish for dangerous reactions against commonwealths fit only for contempt, and liable to invite attack whenever a centre of crystallization for military-minded enterprise gets formed anywhere in their neighborhood.

The war-party is assuredly right in affirming and reaffirming that the martial virtues, although originally gained by the race through war, are absolute and permanent human goods. Patriotic pride and ambition in their military form are, after all, only specifications of a more general competitive passion. They are its first form, but that is no reason for supposing them to be its last form. Men now are proud of belonging to a conquering nation, and without a murmur they lay down their persons and their wealth, if by so doing they may fend off subjection. But who can be sure that *other aspects of one's country* may not, with time and education and suggestion enough, come to be regarded with similarly effective feelings of pride and shame? Why should men not some day feel that it is worth a blood-tax to belong to a collectivity superior in *any* ideal respect? Why should they not blush with indignant shame if the community that

owns them is vile in any way whatsoever? Individuals, daily more numerous, now feel this civic passion. It is only a question of blowing on the spark till the whole population gets incandescent, and on the ruins of the old morals of military honour, a stable system of morals of civic honour builds itself up. What the whole community comes to believe in grasps the individual as in a vise. The war-function has graspt us so far; but constructive interests may some day seem no less imperative, and impose on the individual a hardly lighter burden.

Let me illustrate my idea more concretely. There is nothing to make one indignant in the mere fact that life is hard, that men should toil and suffer pain. The planetary conditions once for all are such, and we can stand it. But that so many men, by mere accidents of birth and opportunity, should have a life of *nothing else* but toil and pain and hardness and inferiority imposed upon them, should have *no* vacation, while others natively no more deserving never get any taste of this campaigning life at all, — *this* is capable of arousing indignation in reflective minds. It may end by seeming shameful to all of us that some of us have nothing but campaigning, and others nothing but unmanly ease. If now — and this is my idea — there were, instead of military conscription a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature*, the injustice would tend to be evened out, and numerous other goods to the commonwealth would follow. The military ideals of hardihood and discipline would be wrought into the growing fibre of the people; no one would remain blind as the luxurious classes now are blind, to man's real relations to the globe he lives on, and to the permanently sour and hard foundations of his higher life. To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dish-washing, clothes-washing, and window-

washing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and stoke-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas. They would have paid their blood-tax, done their own part in the immemorial human warfare against nature, they would tread the earth more proudly, the women would value them more highly, they would be better fathers and teachers of the following generation.

Such a conscription, with the state of public opinion that would have required it, and the many moral fruits it would bear, would preserve in the midst of a pacific civilization the manly virtues which the military party is so afraid of seeing disappear in peace. We should get toughness without callousness, authority with as little criminal cruelty as possible, and painful work done cheerily because the duty is temporary, and threatens not, as now, to degrade the whole remainder of one's life. I spoke of the "moral equivalent" of war. So far, war has been the only force that can discipline a whole community, and until an equivalent discipline is organized, I believe that war must have its way. But I have no serious doubt that the ordinary prides and shames of social man, once developed to a certain intensity, are capable of organizing such a moral equivalent as I have sketched, or some other just as effective for preserving manliness of type. It is but a question of time, of skillful propagandism, and of opinion-making men seizing historic opportunities.

The martial type of character can be bred without war. Strenuous honour and disinterestedness abound elsewhere. Priests and medical men are in a fashion educated to it, and we should all feel some degree of it imperative if we were conscious of our work as an obligatory service to the state. We should be *owned*, as soldiers are by the army, and our

pride would rise accordingly. We could be poor, then, without humiliation, as army officers now are. The only thing needed henceforward is to inflame the civic temper as past history has inflamed the military temper. H. G. Wells, as usual, sees the centre of the situation. "In many ways," he says, "military organization is the most peaceful of activities. When the contemporary man steps from the street, of clamorous insincere advertisement, push, adulteration, underselling and intermittent employment, into the barrack-yard, he steps on to a higher social plane, into an atmosphere of service and co-operation and of infinitely more honourable emulations. Here at least men are not flung out of employment to degenerate because there is no immediate work for them to do. They are fed and drilled and trained for better services. Here at least a man is supposed to win promotion by self-forgetfulness and not by self-seeking. And beside the feeble and irregular endowment of research by commercialism, its little short-sighted snatches at profit by innovation and scientific economy, see how remarkable is the steady and rapid development of method and appliances in naval and military affairs! Nothing is more striking than to compare the progress of civil conveniences which has been left almost entirely to the trader, to the progress in military apparatus during the last few decades. The house-appliances of to-day for example, are little better than they were fifty years ago. A house of to-day is still almost as ill-ventilated, badly heated by wasteful fires, clumsily arranged and furnished as the house of 1858. Houses a couple of hundred years old are still satisfactory places of residence, so little have our standards risen. But the rifle or battleship of fifty years ago was beyond all comparison inferior to those we possess; in power, in speed, in convenience alike. No one has a use now for such superannuated things." \*

\* *First and Last Things*, 1908, p. 215.

Wells adds \* that he thinks that the conceptions of order and discipline, the tradition of service and devotion, of physical fitness, unstinted exertion, and universal responsibility, which universal military duty is now teaching European nations, will remain a permanent acquisition, when the last ammunition has been used in the fireworks that celebrate the final peace. I believe as he does. It would be simply preposterous if the only force that could work ideals of honour and standards of efficiency into English or American natures should be the fear of being killed by the Germans or the Japanese. Great indeed is Fear; but it is not, as our military enthusiasts believe and try to make us believe, the only stimulus known for awakening the higher ranges of men's spiritual energy. The amount of alteration in public opinion which my utopia postulates is vastly less than the difference between the mentality of those black warriors who pursued Stanley's party on the Congo with their cannibal war-cry of "Meat! Meat" and that of the "general-staff" of any civilized nation. History has seen the latter interval bridged over: the former one can be bridged over much more easily.

\* *Ibid.*, p. 226.

## A PEACE WITHIN \*

(1912)

*Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy*

IN A CERTAIN academic circle the question was recently raised as to whether the English movement, springing from Carlyle and Ruskin, were not needed in Germany, even though it might take another form. In England the great sermon on the duty of love and reconciliation has taken the practical form of settlements — establishments which serve as common dwelling houses for rich and poor, and give to the former opportunities of every kind for sharing life with the latter, and thus, in a symbolic manner, bridging over a dangerous chasm not only between single individuals but also between classes.

An exhaustive discussion resulted in the following understanding: that the situation with which this movement concerned itself had for a long time been cared for by us in a more relevant and inclusive manner. The well-being and education of the people are well looked after, and all regulations to improve the habits of living and living standards of the lower classes function in a fairly healthy way with us. On the other hand, the inner life, the productive power of the English movement, holds within itself something that

\* "A Peace Within" (*Ein Landfrieden*) was written in the winter of 1911-1912 as a result of a seminar discussion at the University of Heidelberg. The document appears in the volume *Im Kampf um die Erwachsenenbildung 1912 bis 1926*, by Werner Picht and Eugen Rosenstock (Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer, 1926). It appears here in translation owing to the generous assistance of Mrs. Mary Henderson, of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

attracts the attention far more than its positive success. In this respect it surpasses all German arrangements. Moreover, although in Germany the youth of the upper classes may perhaps make individual attempts for social welfare, such attempts are only a form of cold and narrow charity to the needy, even though they may be performed by individuals with great devotion. The English movement calls directly upon the individual young man to take his share of responsibility. "The whole man must move at once" is the way the English put it. It is a movement among those who are themselves spiritually moving, and they will discard the form which was created by their own enthusiasm as soon as it threatens to overrule the spirit; it is a movement of youth itself.

And there is still another thing which we lack, which the incomplete English organization has achieved: a feeling of the dependence of the different classes of society upon each other which prevents the upper classes from entertaining the mistaken idea that they are leading a better or altogether independent sort of life. It awakens the soul of the city man, who (without roots in the soil to hold him, so easily imagining himself to be free) comes to realize that he is as much in debt to the unsophisticated feeling of the plain people for his life work as are these to the mental achievements and the leadership of the more carefully educated. We fail to be inwardly impressed by the horrible possibility that within the German countries there may develop, not two classes, but two nations, opposed to each other: and yet the Marxist is always giving expression to this frivolous thought. Then the lower class, which feels itself to be under the yoke of foreigners, will draw to itself all the spiritual possessions of the upper classes which it understands enough to grasp and to assimilate, and will boast that it can build a new and independent culture of its own

out of it. Yes, the poets of Germany are already read by labor groups as if only the class warriors could understand them rightly, as if at least their manner of enjoying poetry were a different one from that of the Bourgeois. Thus a rift is made in the very realm of art and culture which heretofore united all men. The upper class reacts by imagining its pleasures to be equally exclusive.

Fear and horror are roused by the picture of a nation which knows only how to misuse its most sacred heritage as a weapon in a spiritual civil war, which suffers under the delusion that the poets of a people have arisen from two different worlds with different viewpoints, or that a compatriot can, indeed must, be further from me in belief and feeling than a foreigner who is more nearly my social equal. But enough; all those engaged in the discussion strove to find out where in our society there might be remnants of a unifying way of life, and where ardent faith might be able to bring forth inner union once more.

The answer was not far to seek, since we possess that which the English entirely lack, a people's army.<sup>1</sup> In the last extremity the most antagonistic Germans find themselves together in rank and file. Certainly, today the gift

<sup>1</sup> The American reader may be reminded of a few central features of the German army service system. Every man had to serve either two years with the infantry or the field artillery, or three years with any other branch of the army. A man might choose his regiment; and the more of these volunteers found in a special regiment the better its reputation and quality; but only the choice of the unit was voluntary. Men of high-school training enjoyed a privilege as *Einjaehrig-Freiwillige*. If they were ready to pay their own expenses, the fact that they bore the financial burden made up for one year's service. They were also entitled to become reserve officers after a year of regular service, and they could serve any time between their eighteenth and twenty-fourth years, while the regular conscript had no choice as to his year of service.



which a self-sacrificing people offer to their country, military service, is squandered in an unmerciful manner. Our army must be a school for war. But at the same time it is too gigantic a body, and too faithful a mirror of the whole nation in smaller dimensions, for such an extraordinary objective as war alone to keep it in a healthy condition during half a century of peace. For a long time the more imaginative members of the officers' corps have recognized the peoples' army as the most wonderful field for the education of the people. The higher the rank of the military hierarchy the more familiar to them are such trains of thought. However, many things prevent their knowledge from leading to action. For the practical goal remains war, and the inert dogma, the rigid conception of an entirely militarized soldiery is retained which in times of peace recognizes only hollow, sleepy virtues and the rut of thought represented in the everlastingly repeated speech made on the Kaiser's birthday. The isolation and lack of feeling in the officers' corps grows, and they ignore countless elements to which they should try to join themselves.

But worse than this, the German army contains one group of entirely homeless members which it is not able properly to place — the corps of *Einjaehrig-Freiwillige*.<sup>2</sup> One can positively say, the better and more conscientious the one-year service man, the more unhappy must he feel during this year, which means for the majority laziness in deed and in thought, luxury and ostentation exceeding any of their earlier habits. An almost ridiculous incongruity between him and the common soldier, and also between him and the officers, explains the situation but also makes it worse. This is really a sore spot which contaminates the entire upper class of the army, and makes the reserve officers' corps in-

<sup>2</sup> The groups mentioned before as paying their way owing to their financial means and educational privileges.

ferior to the active officers' corps in their general feeling of self-consciousness and independence. The best of the one-year volunteers learn an enormous amount but generally are isolated entirely from the rest of the group. The idea of using this time for the special development of one's own being occurs to almost no one, and public opinion regards the period only as an interlude.

But all these observations must not mislead you to think of a change in the make-up of the army, of a reform thereof by the state! The army is "no place for experiments"! and what is needed is "men, not measures." What we complain of is the want of life and of spirit. Only the striving and the strength of individuals can bring forth spiritual movements, and then such a spiritual movement kindles a light by which the way to action is easy to find.

Only a program which is based on the voluntary action of the individual can help. This program must bring the young man into touch with youth of every class and description, for coöperation and for work. Therefore it must first of all seek out young men who can be made aware of this call. Where shall we begin? How can we begin in such a way that the first steps may be small, but that a large organization can eventually grow out of them? It is the purpose of this essay to outline the possibility of such a slow development.

A large number of those entitled to one-year military service — the exact number makes no difference — are exempted from one-year service for minor and, in relation to their efficiency, often meaningless reasons. Fortunately the state has not seen fit to ask for compensation because military service is still regarded not as a burden but as an honor. Might there not be among these exempted men a handful of idealists who would nevertheless be willing to give their year to a worthy cause? The way would have to be pre-

pared in speech and writing, in order, on the one hand, to inspire the youth who are now growing up with the vision of a new duty and, on the other hand, to see to it that the military authorities and public opinion would give their approval to these young pioneers for the service which I am about to describe.

At first it would certainly be chiefly the older classes who would offer themselves, those who had already found time to think of such new objectives and to grasp energetically at such ideas. There would also, however, be included some who had a fairly complete education and had developed a rather positive attitude. At first let us imagine only ten young men, graduated from such different branches of the universities as medicine, divinity, law, and the arts. It would be better certainly if other professions were immediately represented. These, in spite of their having been exempted, would offer their services for one year, during which they would pay their own expenses. The minister of war or the chief in command would assign them to a regiment which was recruited as far as possible from city boys, of the more alert type but also of the more difficult type, probably not from infantry regiments in which there were two-year volunteers, because these are far less in need of the influence. The regiment from which these men are detached for a year must receive financial compensation. At first a guarantee fund can be created through gifts for the payment of these inconsiderable sums.

This troop, ten leaders to eighty or ninety men, should be placed, according to the location of the garrison, in a field camp, barracks, or something of the kind, eventually on a country estate. Either the management of the estate could be undertaken — in which case the winter would provide time for theoretical education — or any beneficial project in the province which would otherwise remain undone,

such as clearing the land and preparing it for cultivation or draining it, and some other work such as simple building or the carrying on of some simple industry. The specific program would have to be arranged, first, in accordance with the chance possibilities of the neighborhood; and second, in accordance with the capabilities of those enlisted for the year.

At this point probably a great many questions will be raised and the greatest doubts expressed. But just here one should be allowed a few polemics against German cautiousness and calculation, and as an exception frankly praise the *élan* of our American cousins. The problem is, just what can a group working happily with enthusiastic foremen accomplish? And we must admit with shame that we have no idea what this may be, because we are entirely lacking in experience in this direction. I myself was once a witness when a simple mountaineer built a charming little house in his village, entirely without directions. Should not far greater results be possible if there were, perhaps, a young architect on hand, and all were proud and eager to make a success? The undeniable difficulties would, moreover, continually diminish the more regularly the organization functioned and the wider its scope. For then the newcomers, taken in about every half-year and thus given the opportunity of learning the work, could carry on the old undertaking. There are also certainly many other possibilities. It would show the blessedness of an organization purposeful in itself rather than one existing only for the potentiality of war.

The fact that there would be difficulties, however, constitutes good fortune for these young troopers. For out of the common concern for success, which must also take into consideration the possibility of failure — a concern which, *nota bene*, in spite of all inspections is more and more being lost sight of in our army — will arise the bond

that will unite the young leader to his companions of almost like age. A certain amount of outward success, within modest limits, must be required of and achieved by the group. This requirement should also be set forth by the military authorities as a guarantee of earnest work. But an experiment, an attempt, a new way of learning, the development of skills never yet put into practice by leaders and the people, all these must certainly be allowed and gladly allowed. The program which the leader offers beforehand must be permitted to be improved upon in the light of experience. Something economically profitable would be accomplished, which would almost always be demonstrated by a money return. First of all, the guarantee fund would be reimbursed with this money. Second, for once the troopers would have to throw themselves in completely and thus gain in courage and initiative. Third, the program would be a great means of education and training in self-reliance for those enlisted for two years. These men have behind them in their previous year an excellent preliminary school, the continuance of which today is most lamentably lacking. It is no accident that the recruits call every man of the third year a criminal, since he has no new purposes and higher goal in this last year.

The accomplishment of all these good things would be made possible at first thanks to the unshakable enthusiasm of the small squad, sure within itself of victory, but in the course of the slow growth of the work this enthusiasm — possessed only by the leaders in the beginning — would continually raise the ardor to enlist.

Reality would take the place of the dream, and instead of a sacrifice by one part of society there would arise in the end a unified life-giving atmosphere which could never be lost; a community in which fine art and literature would find their place, no longer separating human beings but

drawing them together — a community of such a kind that it costs us some effort not to waste our time now in describing it with enthusiasm.

It should, of course, be taken for granted that free time, in so far as it is spent socially, should be spent with the troop. Solitude, the desire to be alone, in contrast to the service in the regular army, are to be respected and must also appear to be worthy of respect to the men. But social life should represent the unity of the leader with his men, even if not always with the whole troop. It will hardly be disputed that social life mirrors the real groupings of society, and that it is desirable that new forces determine them.

This first report cannot search out each individual problem, discuss it, and solve it. Problems and likewise attempts to solve them spring up in solid masses. For example, shall the men at the end of the second year participate in the maneuvers in order to experience in a vital way their broadened horizon and increased skill and also to encourage those who will come after them with their experiences? Or should, perhaps, the purely intellectually trained leader take part in this one-year service in order to gain technical skills? Since the Volunteer Ambulance Service calls for men adapted to service in the field, perhaps they could be drawn in. The question of discipline remains to be examined. The great advantage of the voluntary character of the body and of its independence from the state becomes immediately apparent in the possibility it introduces of discarding some of the ironclad military usages within the groups without damaging the authority of the state. Later, reserve officers can also serve their time in these groups.

The example of a few, among whom each may have a particular motive for such work, will help to establish during the first years a sense of duty (to which they are in honor bound) which will carry along the lazier and more skeptical.

And once the force of the idea has grown so strong that a general idea of the responsibilities of all the people to each other and the dependence of all classes upon each other is not only acknowledged in theory, but lives in the hearts of all, then the institution may carry the name which we in our enthusiasm chose as our title — then "Peace Within" shall reign.

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## THE BATTLE DRESS GENERATION MUST WIN THE PEACE \*

(1940)

*Rolf Gardiner*

THE GENERATION in battle dress has more than the burden of the war to shoulder; on it will fall the tasks of the aftermath of war. It cannot begin too soon to prepare itself for these tasks. Which does not mean building castles in Spain or anticipating events with infertile speculation. But it must know what *it* as a generation wants to do with the opportunities of time. It must know its own mind and heart and determine to have its own way.

Consider what happened in 1919. The wretchedness of 1939 was in no small measure caused by the failure of the 1914-18 generation of soldiers to achieve a policy and to implement it. This failure was mainly due to the voluntary system of enlistment in the early years of the war. The flower of England went out to die and, in fact, perished. The returning soldiers were war-sick, disillusioned, deprived of their best leaders. When the armistice came they drifted home and quickly lost nearly all the threads of comradeship gained in the trenches. They had no voice in the counsels of the nation because there existed no organs of articulation whereby they could make their point of view felt. They became drowned in the welter of reassembling civil life, and

\* This essay was published early in 1940 in *North Sea and Baltic*, a British publication of which Rolf Gardiner is the editor. "The Battle Dress Generation Must Win the Peace" is reprinted here with his permission. Mr. Gardiner attended some of the early German work camps organized by Professor Rosenstock-Huessy, and in the last few years he has pioneered in developing land service camps in England.



power was left to the war-weary and vindictive "Old Gang" and the peace was bungled. There was no "land fit for heroes" to welcome them and no heroic spirit left to claim it. The nineteen-twenties were what one survivor of the war has called "that devastated area of the spirit."

A repetition of such a fiasco must on no account be allowed. In 1939 we had the same hoary old men that directed the 1914-18 war still in command of policy. Is it likely that they will have enough vitality and self-assurance left to dictate a new peace? Will our fantastically fussy and over-complicated bureaucracy indulge in an orgy of P.E.P. or will it be worn out and discredited? And, having spent six millions a day on the war alone, will England be capable of sustaining that commercial suzerainty to which she has laid claim for so long, or will she experience the asperities and purgings of financial poverty and inflation?

In any case the demobilization period will not be easy for the generation in battle dress. There will be months of delay, of waiting and inquiring, before the younger soldiers, sailors, and airmen can be absorbed into the careers of a much-changed civil world. There may be a time during which men will experience frustration and enforced idleness. Should not this period be used constructively, creatively? It might provide the great opportunity for the younger half of the nation to prepare itself for influencing events.

One suggestion which readers of this paper might be invited to discuss is that on demobilization the really active-minded and keen-spirited ex-service men should join camps of volunteers for service on the land. Well-informed people foresee that at the end of the war, with normal trade channels blocked and our industrial system dislocated, the task of feeding the nation will be one of great difficulty. Farmers whose production has been intensified to meet the need will require additional labor. Much land unwisely farmed during

the war, in response to subsidies and easy prices, may have become derelict and require reconditioning. The woodlands, which are everywhere being felled to meet the emergency, will need replanting. Land Service Camps organized on a voluntary basis could be of signal value to the nation under such conditions. And to demobilized service men they would be a potential boon, for the following reasons: —

1. They would provide the opportunity of doing useful and necessary work in healing surroundings during a period of exhaustion and, possibly, of further strain and confusion.
2. They would give those who have had experience of service life a chance to think afresh about the vocations they wish to follow, and to view the new conditions which emerge after the war.
3. They would provide focal points at which the younger men of the nation could pool their ideas and make clear to themselves and to others the policy, on broad lines, they wish to see adopted.

These Land Service Camps, best organized on a regional basis (with men with homes in, say, East Anglia or Wessex setting up camps in these regions) would, during the months following an armistice, have a practical, psychological, and political value. They might be lighthouses of steadiness and vision in a sea of troubles. New men projected from the body of the nation, to take control of affairs, might visit the camps to expound their ideas and to gain support or to listen to criticism. Without allying themselves to any political party, the camps might reflect the mood of the younger half of the nation and be a force of real value. If the camps sought to be self-governing communities, aiming at a balanced life of physical, mental, and social exertion and recreation, they might provide centers of wisdom and sanity.

The danger, of course, is that the men in battle dress will be so sick of organized social life at the end of the war that they will shun any corporate form of activity, however free. But this reaction would be short-sighted, and the most active minds in battle dress must strive to see that wasted opportunities do not occur from sheer fatigue and ennui. For this time the battle-dress generation must win the peace, and this cannot be done by drifting home to look on and expect things to happen. Things do not happen unless they are desired and willed. There is no future for an England that waits for things to happen while vested interests rule the roost. The men in battle dress, unlike the 1914 generation, do not purpose to die for King and Country, but to endure the war and to win the peace by living for it.

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